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ANOTHER RUHR CRISIS

THE Ruhr crisis has become an annual event. Each autumn the officials make cautiously optimistic forecasts; and each January they are rendered nonsensical by the dishonouring even of the meagre ration. At the last moment it is discovered that stocks have been run down in the hope of increased imports which have failed to arrive; that deliveries by the German farmers to the *Laender*, and by the *Laender* which enjoy food surpluses to the central authorities, have been grossly over-estimated. For a few weeks the Ruhr workers show signs of militancy against Military Government, while Military Government tries to throw the responsibility on German officials who are in no position to suppress the black market. There are headlines in the world press, and statesmanlike letters in *The Times*. Then, as spring comes back, the ripples subside. We forget the Ruhr and all its troubles for another twelve months.

Will this process be repeated in 1948? Very probably. A natural reluctance to be held responsible for perpetuating the division of Germany causes Mr. Bevin and Mr. Marshall to shy at the idea of any drastic reorganisation. The proposed strengthening of the bi-zonal committees at Frankfurt, which Marshal Sokolovsky has denounced as tantamount to the setting up of a German Government, actually leaves the central authorities without any attributes of sovereignty or sanctions against the *Laender*. If Trizonia is formed by the addition of the French-occupied areas, the situation will be rendered still worse, since the French authorities and the Christian Democratic politicians of the French Zone will both support decentralisation, which means still more autonomy for the *Laender*.

But the root of the difficulty is the ambiguity of British and American policy. Whereas the Russians have known what they wanted and done it, we have administered Germany with divided counsels and divided minds. We wanted it to revive—but not too much. We wanted Germans to take responsibility—but felt that we could not trust them with sovereign powers. We included Western Germany economically in the Marshall Plan—but we excluded Germans politically from the assembly of the Sixteen Nations.

In a letter published in another column, Victor Gollancz makes a series of proposals for dealing with the immediate crisis. With most of them we agree, but his call for a Government at Frankfurt raises formidable problems. Are we ready to let Western Germany have its own foreign policy? Are the German political parties prepared to co-operate in a government which must appear to accept partition? The answer to both questions is "No."

Surely it is clear by now that there is no solution within the framework of national sovereignty. We can neither permit the revival of a truncated and chauvinist Germany, nor are we ruthless enough to run Germany as a colony. The French, from their standpoint, oppose any plan to restore a part or the whole of Germany as a sovereign state. Mr. Bevin, in turn, points to the fatal effects of economic decentralisation which necessarily follow from the French and American demand for virtually autonomous *Laender*. Both are right; both are also wrong.

The only way to break the deadlock is to raise the discussion to a new level, by treating Germany as part of a Western Union in which every participant, both victor and vanquished, forgoes part of his sovereign rights in the interests of all. As part of a Western federation, German industry could be rebuilt under due control and without fear of a revival of militarism. And equally, the Germans could be expected to accept international planning of their own economy, if that planning were also applied to the economy of their neighbours.

Such projects are still condemned as Utopian. But has the dismissal of Utopia and the obstinate determination to muddle through shown any results? Can the "realists" point to any likelihood that, if they have their way, the Ruhr crisis will not be repeated in the spring of 1949? We have accepted the Russian challenge to make the Marshall Plan work. It cannot possibly work, as even the Americans are beginning to see, unless we are prepared to make a new start and to plan the reconstruction, not simply of Western Germany, but of all Western Europe on a federal and Socialist basis.

Congress and E.R.P.

Now that the Senate and House Foreign Relations Committees have begun to hear evidence on the Marshall Plan from unofficial personages, there is likely to be a spate of suggestions more controversial than those made by the official witnesses. The spokesmen for the Administration stuck pretty closely to the State Department brief: the scale of E.R.P. was not extravagant, and aid would cost fewer dollars than the armaments which would otherwise be needed to stem triumphant Communism; the administration of E.R.P. should have flexibility, and should therefore be in the hands of the State Department; and "strings" of a sort which would be regarded in Europe as an invasion of sovereign rights would defeat the purpose of the Plan. So far, so good; and the reception of this testimony by the Committees was less hostile than might have been feared. Senator Vandenberg, however, was not alone in voicing fears that E.R.P. might go the "easy way" of the 1946 Dollar Loan; and the Senate Committee was evidently impressed with the view of Mr. John J. McCloy, president of the International Bank, that there should be strict supervision to ensure that recipient nations did not squander the aid extended. From the standpoint of the creditor, such a stipulation is reasonable. More tendentious were the proposals put before the Senate Committee on Tuesday by Mr. Bernard Baruch, who endorsed Senator Wiley's suggestion that, in return for aid, the United States should secure strategic bases in Europe, and recommended that the Sixteen Nations should bind themselves in a "Defence Union" underwritten against aggression by the United States and subordinated to the "overall global strategy" of a "general staff for peace." In view of Mr. Marshall's attitude, it seems unlikely that the strategic aspects of the Plan will be emphasised on such embarrassing lines. More, we

fear, may be heard of Mr. Baruch's suggestion that the aid programme should take, in part, the form of loans to foreign industries, secured on their assets, and that the Governments of the recipient States should undertake to secure the repayment, in dollars, of all such loans before proceeding to nationalise any of the industries thus mortgaged.

Mr. Gandhi at Uno

Although Mr. Gandhi's fast was directed principally at restoring communal harmony in Delhi, its influence has spread far wider than that city. Such is the supra-human power of the man that no persons responsible to the people in either India or Pakistan would dare to have it said of them that, however remotely, they caused or hastened his death. Even the Pakistan delegate at Uno felt bound to emphasise his Government's earnest desire that Mr. Gandhi should suffer no unnecessary pain or danger. A superb politician, although often unconsciously so, Mr. Gandhi timed his fast to take place at exactly the moment when it could have the greatest effect in improving relations between the two Dominions. A great deal of the credit for the encouraging first results of the direct negotiations at Lake Success is due, therefore, to him. The two Governments have now agreed that an end must be put to the fighting and that a plebiscite must be held. It will be the task of the Commission which is being sent to Kashmir to furnish reports and recommendations to the Security Council on which arrangements for the truce and plebiscite can be based, as well as to exercise what mediating influence they can on the spot. The major difficulty now is to devise arrangements which will either satisfy, or check, the invading tribesmen and those Kashmiri Muslims who are fighting on their side. That will be no easy matter, as the tribesmen care little for Mr. Gandhi and probably less for Uno. They are also not convinced of the superiority of the ballot box over the sword.

Cease-Fire in Indonesia

The Dutch have driven a hard bargain before accepting the proposals of the Uno Goodwill Mission for a "cease-fire" in Indonesia. They retain the areas which they conquered in the course of last year's brief campaign; and they were evidently bent on taking yet more of the Republican territory by a similar *coup* had not the Indonesians given way. As matters now stand, the Indonesian Republic has in effect renounced its claim to be more than one among a number of co-equal units which will go to the making of the new Indonesian Federation under the Dutch Crown. They would hardly have given way so far, even in face of Dutch military superiority and power of blockade, if they had felt sure of having the majority of Indonesians behind them. They have, however, no such assurance: the Dutch have enjoyed a good deal of success in getting the co-operation of Indonesians in the areas under their military control, mainly because the well-to-do elements in the population do not relish the prospect of prolonged warfare and are afraid of the tribal groups, which are out for loot much more than for any Republican or Nationalist idea. It looks now as if the Dutch will get their Indonesian Federation in accordance with their own interpretation of the Lingadjati Agreement, and will be able, behind a façade of Indonesian independence within the Dutch corporate State, to retain a great deal of the reality of power.

Deadlock at Havana

The Havana Conference, which is engaged in drawing up a Charter for the International Trade Organisation of Uno, has now been sitting for two months, without getting much nearer to an agreed draft. It has now decided to prolong its sessions into February, in the hope of reaching agreement; and it is clear that the United States is bringing a great deal of pressure to bear behind the scenes. It is indeed being suggested that acceptance of the draft Charter pretty much as it has emerged from earlier discussions in London and Geneva is to be regarded as an implied condition of the Marshall Plan, in the same way as British adherence to the earlier (and still more drastic) American Trade Proposals was made a condition of the Loan in 1945-6. The difficulty about this is that, at Havana, the main opposition to the United States proposals is coming, not from Western Europe but from the less developed countries, such as India, which object strongly to having their trade policy subjected to veto by their more advanced neighbours and rivals. The main difference arises, not over tariffs, to which the Americans—insistent on their own independence—naturally raise no objections, but on any form of quantitative restriction or licensing of imports. All such restrictions the Americans wish to outlaw save as emergency measures; and, even in emergency, they wish to make them subject to consultation and to consent by I.T.O. A further dispute concerns the right of countries to adopt new preferences except with I.T.O.'s consent. The economically backward countries are taking the lead in opposing these restrictions on their freedom to frame trade policy as they please, including mutual arrangements with their neighbours, without extension to everybody else under the "most favoured nation" principle. There are also disputes about the possible reference of disputes under the Charter to the International Court or to some other authority. Great Britain, tied by what it agreed to when it accepted the American Loan and by what it has since accepted at Geneva, is in no position to take an independent line at Havana; but it will be a mercy if the less developed countries are able, in fighting for their own freedom, to help in maintaining ours—to make arrangements for preferential buying where we can afford to foot the bill.

Recovery in Eastern Europe

The figures for 1947 production in the Soviet Union, issued by the State Planning Commission, indicate that, in nearly all industries, the shortcomings of 1946 have been made good. Gross output in 1947 showed an increase over the previous year of 22 per cent., with agriculture, petroleum and textiles considerably exceeding the average gain. Equally impressive is the first batch of returns of Polish production. Coal output, at 59 million tons, shows an increase of 25 per cent. over 1946, and is nearly 3 per cent. above the 1947 target. Coal exports rose from 13.5 million to 17 million tons. Target figures for cotton and silk textiles were also beaten. More remarkable still, production of electrical power was 66 per cent. higher than the output of the same power stations in 1938, and showed an increase of 10 per cent. over 1946. In the case of steel—a vital element in the reconstruction both of Poland and of all the countries linked in the "Molotov Plan"—the target figures for the year were exceeded by about 9 per cent.

Military Manpower

Not the least of the tasks facing the Government before the Easter Recess is the clarification of their attitude towards conscription. Criticism, already mounting, will reach a climax in the debates on the Service estimates, and will come in equal strength from both sides of the House. The central problem is that of giving an adequate training for twelve months to approximately 200,000 new recruits a year. With the run-down in the size of the Armed Forces, this has become increasingly difficult. Hence the decision to put back for three months the date at which age-groups are required, during 1948, to register for National Service, and the growing tendency to grant exemptions to wider classes of workers. One solution proposed is to reduce the period of conscription from a year to six months; but if the Government is right in its assessment of the numbers required in reserve and under arms, and of the amount of training needed, this clearly cannot be the right answer. For the Navy and the Air Force, with their proportionately high numbers of Regulars, the problem is nowhere near so acute as it is for the Army. Here the obstacle is the dwindling cadre of long-term Servicemen able to instruct the new recruits. The Regular element of the Army is now somewhat less than 140,000. It is impossible for it to cope with large intakes unless the proportion of Regulars to recruits can be maintained at a ratio slightly higher than one to three. It has already fallen below this safety margin, and will fall further below it by the end of the year, if it is obliged to take on another 150,000 men for training at the same time as it is losing all those who have been in the Army, and who are not on long-term engagements, for two years or more. The only way, apart from reducing the length of conscription, to correct this situation is a re-examination of the new Pay Code. Recruiting for the Regular Army cannot possibly be stimulated so long as virtually no tradesmen's rates are paid and there is virtually no differentiation between conscripts and Regulars. It is vital to ensure that every member of the Regular Army is a potential N.C.O. and capable of imparting his knowledge to trainees. To-day the intelligence standard of Regular entrants is not high enough to provide for this, nor are their numbers sufficient to give the necessary ratio between anticipated recruits and Regulars.

PARLIAMENT: Warming-up

Wednesday

PARLIAMENT re-assembled in the mood of one who, waking to middle-age, begins to brood on mortality. For all the happy back-slapping of the lobbies, few members were free from a faint Election *Angst*. They had been to their constituencies in the Recess, and seen their prospective opponents in full throat. They had listened to the threatening tick-tock of a hostile election machine. They had looked 1950 in its somewhat inscrutable face.

Ignoring these subjective apprehensions, the routine of the House moved along its impersonal course. Mr. Speaker called the questioners; the Clerk proceeded to read the Orders of the Day; and Members had the consolation (or was it frustration?) of knowing that, whether they were returned or not at the next Election, all this would go on for quite a few years to come. Not so predictable is the fortune of individuals. In 1945 to have imagined Rees-Williams answering for the Colonial Office at the despatch-box would have seemed too appropriate to be possible; to have visualised Hugh Dalton translated to the third back bench at the side of Leah Manning could only have sprung from an after-dinner pipe-dream. Yet there they were, the one to remind us that virtue sometimes gets its deserts, the other that it sometimes doesn't. On the Labour back benches, everyone was glad to see the former Chancellor's return to the House.

He listened with attention to a somewhat lethargic debate on the Princess Elizabeth's and the Duke of Edinburgh's Annuities Bill, which he had helped to prepare. Ronald Chamberlain, while declaring his support of the system of royalty, made a well-reasoned case for a fixed allowance with certifiable expenses. Emrys Hughes, a Republican, suggested that instead of being attached to the Admiralty, the Duke should "dig up coal." The Tories laughed.

Not all Labour Members were quite happy about the dichotomy of the Overseas Food Corporation and the Colonial Development Corporation in the Overseas Resources Development Bill. Rees-Williams and Strachey resisted attempts by the Tories to alter it, but the debate went on quietly till Michael Foot, resenting Oliver Stanley's jibe at his "week in Jamaica," introduced a few moments of ferocity. He gave Stanley—who is, generally speaking, popular on the Government benches—the opportunity of showing himself as apt in the stylised frown as in the stylised smile.

MAURICE EDELMAN

THE DOCTORS' DILEMMA

THE British Medical Association, in an attempt to resist the will of Parliament, is resorting next week-end to a strike ballot. There is no need to quibble about words: the doctors call it a "plebiscite," although the "plebs" are the pawns and not the participants; they have promised not to withhold treatment from patients—the General Medical Council would have to take drastic action if they did; and they will reimburse themselves, if need be, from the £2,000,000 Fighting (*i.e.*, Strike) Fund. If 13,000 out of 20,000 doctors agree, they will try to make the National Health Service Act unworkable.

The doctors have the right to strike; but, before deciding to endorse their "professional" stand, the public should clearly realise that the issue is a straight trades' dispute over terms and conditions of service. A patient should support his doctor if he feels that his G.P. should have a higher capitation fee and no basic salary, the right to buy and sell practices (the patient, of course, realising that he is part of the ledger-transaction), the right to demand fees from public funds for practising in a district where his services are redundant, and the right (no matter how inexperienced) to practise midwifery, although the Act provides mothers with highly qualified obstetricians. If he feels strongly about the legal relationships of medical partners under the Act, the patient should support his doctor—even if it means insisting on paying bills for attention to which his compulsory insurance entitles him. But the sympathetic patient should understand that these are now the issues, not the high principles of an immaculate profession dedicated as a vocation to the self-sacrificing service of the sick.

It is more important, however, for the doctors themselves at this critical juncture to realise how seriously they are being misled by their own leaders. They have been assured over and over again that, if only they stand firm, they can get the operation of the Act postponed until the Minister gives in on the outstanding differences. The B.M.A. reckons that three months' resistance would force Mr. Bevan to capitulate, and it assures doctors that during that time they need not worry about their income: National Health Insurance would go on and they would continue to draw their panel fees.

This amounts to misdirection. Even if Mr. Bevan wanted to postpone the appointed day, he cannot extend National Health Insurance. That has nothing to do with his Health Service Act and everything to do with Mr. James Griffiths's National Insurance Act, into which N.H.I. disappears as part of the bigger scheme of social security. Both Acts come into force on July 5th and are completely interdependent. The vast administrative arrangements of the National Insurance Act—contribution cards, increased maternity benefits, better pensions for widows, funeral benefits, and so on—have been tied to that date.

Before they sign next week's ballot forms doctors must face the facts on which their leaders have misled them: the National Health Service Act *will* come into force on July 5th, even if the majority of doctors say they will not co-operate; no threats, no bludgeoning of the Minister will alter that. National Health Insurance and the "panel" will cease, and panel doctors who boycott the Service will have to depend on the £2,000,000 Strike Fund for their succour. (Simple arithmetic will show that the most each can expect is £140.) On the appointed day, any doctor can take his practice into the public service; after that, he can do so only by permission. Further, those who join at the outset can get full compensation from the £66,000,000 fund—the figure agreed with the profession's representatives; anyone who does not join on July 5th will forfeit the right to compensation. Moreover, before that date patients will have to choose their doctor; the recalcitrant G.P.s will have to refuse them and allow them to go elsewhere.

It has, of course, already occurred to the B.M.A. that a rebel doctor will have to be very strong-willed to send away his patients, and that many who sign "Won't" next week-end are likely to change their minds before next July. So there will be an attempt to get all the doctors in a district to sign a covenant binding themselves not to accept patients under the Act. The covenant cannot be legally valid; and, while the moral sanction on a dissenting colleague will be tough, a few dissenters in any district would wreck the covenant. But where do the interests of the patient figure in this covenant? He will be paying compulsory insurance to meet his doctor's fees and, even if the doctor is prepared to treat him unregistered, the patient is in an invidious position. If loyalty to his family doctor forces him into the position of a private fee-paying patient, his loyalty is being abused.

In spite of all the talk about "doctor-patient relationship," "free choice" and the "interest of the patient," the political warfare compaign which the B.M.A. is waging against the Minister of Health takes little account of the 47,000,000 people for whose well-being the National Health Service was designed. On that score, the profession should note that even those newspapers which delight in finding any stick with which to beat the Government are ambiguous in their support; they cannot traduce a scheme which is fundamentally sound and enterprising. So they blame Mr. Bevan, not for his scheme but for his intransigence in not making final concessions to the profession, conspicuously on the legal question of partnerships. This is a complicated legal point on which the Minister, not for any political purpose but on the advice of his legal experts, says that he will leave the Courts to decide whether the intention of Parliament (and of himself) has been properly defined by the Act. "Let the Act operate and the Courts judge," he says. "If they have any doubts, I shall ask Parliament to amend the Act." "No," the B.M.A. insists, "amend it now." The legal point does not concern the public; but the issue does. Is legislation to be dictated by a pressure group which says "We will not operate an Act unless it is drafted by our own lawyers?"

The Minister is accused of being "doctrinaire." In fact, he has gone much farther than Mr. Willink ever did in safeguarding the interests of the doctors—on points which they themselves had overlooked in dictating the Willink Bill. His National Hospital Service has won the approval of all but a few intransigents. He has brought the profession into the administration of every aspect of the service, at every key point. He has deprived local authorities of most of the services in which they took a justifiable pride. He has, with what some might regard as mistaken generosity, conceded specialists the right to have their private patients in State-supported hospital beds at whatever fee they, the specialists, care to charge. Those who have the best right to complain are the Fabians, the Socialist Medical Association and the State Medical Service Committee of the Labour Party, who have seen years of work, and important principles, drastically modified in an effort to secure service-by-consent. They have compromised in the interests of the essential merits of the Bevan scheme. How much more so should the doctors who have been humoured by every compromise?

The fight has gone beyond the stage of Bevan-B.M.A. arguments and the closed-door discussions of the medical profession. Parliament has passed an Act which the Government has to administer in six months' time. The people must understand what it means, the Government must have its own campaign, and the propaganda of the B.M.A. must be countered. It will not be difficult. The doctors' case is deplorably weak. They ask for public sympathy because the Government, apart from allowing them to take private patients, insists upon paying them a basic salary of £300 and a minimum of 15s. 6d. per patient; and that includes not only the panel patients, as in the past, but whole families, so that no doctor need ever have a bad debt, and a moderate practice should bring in about £2,000 a year from public funds. They resent the abolition of the sale of practices and expect their patients to be indignant because they are no longer chattels to be sold at a premium to a successor. Yet doctors are to be handsomely reimbursed for giving up this traffic, and doctors who are in debt or have mortgaged their earnings in order to buy a practice can get acquittal of their debt. They are also to have pensions.

The B.M.A. splutters "dictatorship" because the Minister, who is answerable to Parliament for the efficiency of the Service and the payment of public funds, says he will not finance a doctor who wants to practise where there are too many doctors while other areas are lacking. There is nothing to prevent any doctor putting up his plate anywhere and hoping for private patients, but if a tribunal of his own colleagues decides that the area is already well-doctored they can refuse him a public practice. He can appeal to the Minister, who may overrule the decision, but cannot, conversely, overrule the medical tribunal if it allocates a practice. A fund of £400,000 is available for inducements to doctors to go to under-doctored areas. The combination of these two things is what the B.M.A. calls "direction."

The *British Medical Journal* directly appeals to "emotion as the driving force behind reason and action." There was one emotion which used to activate a fine profession, the emotion which Shaw respected even in *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

> Unless a man is led to medicine or surgery through exceptional technical aptitude, or because doctoring is a family tradition, or because he regards it unintelligently as a lucrative and gentlemanly profession, his motives in choosing the career of a healer are clearly generous.

These are the generous motives which the B.M.A. is seeking to debase by arousing emotions which, when they are sincere, are mistaken and, when they are less than sincere, are a betrayal of the doctors' calling and of the loyalty and affection of their patients.

REPORT ON GREECE

Athens, Jan. 12.

WALKING along Athens's main University Street the other day I stumbled in the same pot-hole that had trapped my foot more than three years ago when the British Army landed to liberate Greece. That is as good an index as anything of Greek reconstruction since the war. It is only a part of the current Greek problem. The other part lies in the stretches of guerrilla-ridden countryside in Epirus and Macedonia, where safety and security are unknown luxuries. Civil war in Greece is in full swing. Can it be stopped? Hunger is widespread, despair has touched new depths. Can the common folk be fed? Can they find hope? Here in Athens, American Mission members and high-ranking Britons now watching from the sidelines will tell you privately: "There is no answer to the Greek problem; and there won't be until you get high level agreement on international affairs between Moscow and Washington." But Ministers of the Sophoulis-Tsaldaris Government say: "There is a simple military solution. Increase the army, strengthen its fire power. Then it can seal the borders and destroy the rebels. Increase the Home Guard to picket the cleared areas. That will restore order."

Washington has endorsed the "military solution" school. To the existing 125,000 regular troops of the Greek Army, U.S. Aid Mission Chief Dwight Griswold has announced, are to be added another 12,000, paid for by America. The Home Guard is to be brought up from 40 battalions to 100 battalions, each 500 strong. Objective and competent observers in Athens say this will merely feed the running sore. It may make things more awkward for the guerrillas. But it cannot be decisive. Konitza showed that

Konitza proved no easy win for the Greek Army. Yet they were facing a purely Greek guerrilla force. There is no conclusive evidence that the guerrillas received armed support from across the border. This was told me in Athens by men whose business it is to know. They have added that there is circumstantial evidence that, when hard pressed, the guerrillas could retire into Albania and emerge at other points to continue the battle. They may have received other small-scale aid, possibly in the form of medical attention. But there is no independent evidence that this is so. I have it on high Anglo-American authority that no guerrilla has, in fact, been seen by independent witnesses actually in the process of crossing a frontier. All prisoners captured in the Konitza battle were Greeks. Most were ill shod and comparatively ill clad. There was no sign of an International Brigade.

None of the weapons used by the guerrillas can be shown decisively to have been supplied recently from abroad. Independent army observers here estimate that they used captured Greek Army material and weapons that had been in their possession since the German occupation. Their heaviest weapons in the Konitza attack were four-inch mortars of the kind supplied by the British to the Greek Army, and old Italian .75 field pieces which E.L.A.S. used against the British during the fighting in Athens in December, 1944. Much was made of the presence of guerrilla artillery as proof of foreign support. But the best British Army estimate of total guerrilla artillery strength is not less than two and not more than eight field pieces, admittedly used with much skill, chiefly in covering the Borozani bridge, which put the main road into Konitza out of action. But these .75s may well have been in their possession for years. I am in a position to know that, when they were first used by E.L.A.S. in December, 1944, British Army intelligence was taken completely by surprise. At all events, it is clear that in the Konitza fighting, whatever support the guerrillas received from across the border, it was never heavy enough to be decisive. And it might well have been. They operated without air cover and without armour. Yet fighting was stiff, and the Greek Army had to battle with great courage and sacrifice to dislodge their Greek brothers from the mountain heights. Does not this provide a clue to future engagements? The seven German divisions during the occupation made little impact on the Greek partisans. The additional 12,000 regular Greek troops now granted by the American Aid Mission can hardly tip the scales.

As for sealing the frontiers—sealing them against what? If against a full-scale mechanised invasion, no one considers this to be the danger. It would be presumably against the infiltration of guerrillas in twos and threes—and at night; for that, it is claimed, is how they receive their reinforcements. But to stop this would require, on the textbook basis of one division for every twelve miles, something like 50 divisions for Greece's 600-mile frontier. An army of 750,000. Where do you raise them, and who pays for them? Generous America is hardly likely to finance a bigger army for little Greece than it is prepared to maintain for itself. And what happens to the people in the meantime, while the army is being trained, the weapons delivered? What happens to relief and reconstruction? Germany apart, Greece probably shows fewer signs of reconstruction than any European or Balkan country. There are the same ruins there were when war ended, the same rutted roads, torn track, blown bridges—plus a few others since the guerrillas became active. There is an accentuated hunger, a deeper depression and sense of hopelessness. Greece shows no signs of the 400 million dollars poured into the country by Unrra. Little of the 528 million dollars supplied by Britain went to relief. The bulk was pumped into the army. And now most of the 300 million dollars' worth of U.S. aid is earmarked for the military.

The Central Government in Athens makes little impact on the provinces. Preoccupation with public insecurity gives it little scope to consider those normal problems of welfare of the people which in other lands are regarded as the principal purpose of government. Food is in short supply. You ask about rationing. You are told—and I was told exactly the same thing three years ago—"The Greek is an individualist and will not submit to the regimentation rationing demands." The wise but weak agree that there should be some form of rationing and equalising sacrifice. But they add that this requires an efficient civil service to operate, and an efficient police force and judiciary to enforce. These are luxuries the Greeks do not enjoy. If you have money you need go short of nothing in the towns. You can have all the bread, rice, meat, fish you want. And you can find the most expensive gowns, watches and jewelled trinkets in the well-stuffed luxury shops of Athens. But the common folk find it difficult to buy bread and a newspaper on the same day. (Incidentally, Greek papers are six-pagers. Britain is rationed to four-page dailies. Athenian kiosks bulge with the latest American magazines. Britain, short of dollars, has slashed to zero the import of American journals.)

So, with dollars sidetracked from civilians to feed the army, necessities are scarce, prices rise. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Discontent grows. And guerrilla ranks swell. Last April, when the Greek Army announced its major offensive against the rebels, guerrilla strength stood at 10,000. The offensive collapsed. The current figure of active guerrillas is 28,000. General William Livesay, top military figure of the U.S. Mission, is reported as saying on his return from Washington that the rebels will be routed by late spring or early summer. He might do well to re-read some of the similar claims made last year by the Greek General Staff.

It is pretty clear to independent observers that there is no purely military solution to the Greek problem. Is there, then, a political solution, apart from top level Moscow-Washington accord? There is a current suggestion in Athens by well-wishers groping for the answer that the Government be broadened to include Socialists and genuine Liberals like Svolos, Tsirimokos, Tsouderos and Sofianopoulos. But here the British and U.S. Governments are in a dilemma. For they officially recognised the March, 1946, elections as being genuine, with the abstentionists—Communists, Socialists and Left-centre Liberals—representing no more than 9 per cent. of the total electorate. To bring them into the Government now would be tantamount to abandoning their earlier recognition, tantamount to saying: "We've been wrong for the last two years." Moreover, the Social-democrats under Svolos would probably not enter without safeguards to ensure that they did not become prisoners of the Populists. To this the Populists would not agree; and they wield a predominant majority in Parliament. To enter unconditionally would mean exercising as little influence as that enjoyed by 86-year-old Premier Themistocles Sophoulis. The other day some 600 Communists were rounded up in Athens. It is being said that, with a purely Populist Government, the figure might have been 2,000!

The other part of the reality is that the Socialists command no widespread support. They might have done, had they received British support after the 1944 liberation. But they were cold-shouldered. And, when civil war came, though they broke with E.A.M. and stayed out of the fighting, they refused to denounce the Communists. With the subsequent sharpening of the Right-Left issue, they were squeezed out. Now they are dubbed Communists by the Royalists and dismissed as timid and weak by the Communists. If they entered the Government, would the guerrillas lay down their arms? Hardly. And if they did not, what would be the point of a mild Cabinet reshuffle? The guerrillas will stop only if the Government is broadened to include the Communists. But this has been made more difficult with the proclamation of the Markos regime. Nor will the Populists even think of it, particularly after the bitter struggle at Konitza. And yet, unless the guerrillas can be induced to stop, civil war will continue with added intensity until the Third World War begins. It will indeed precipitate such a war. For, each day, recognition of Markos by Greece's northern neighbours becomes an imminent possibility. And everyone in Athens agrees that that would ultimately mean war. If they think so, then it will mean war, for it no longer takes two to make a war.

That is the pessimistic view of the most competent observers of the Greek issue. These suggest as the only possible solution a firm Uno decision to order a truce and hold fresh elections under a Uno force, including soldiers of the three great Powers. It might do the trick. It is a desperate chance. But there is no real alternative, for the guerrillas have learned the lessons of Konitza. It was their first major operation as a military force. It proved tough. But they were up against regular troops, properly armed, fed and shod, and with rocket-firing air cover. Konitza also saw a vastly raised morale among the regular army, which found itself for the first time at grips with a tangible enemy. Previously it had been fighting shadows. The guerrillas are likely to learn from their mistakes and will probably return to their traditional guerrilla role, becoming once more a phantom mobile army, stalking regular forces, swooping with surprise attacks. If they do—and Greece is textbook guerrilla country—then a few more thousand regular troops will not put them down, not even with the help of the U.S. Marines from the aircraft carrier *Missouri*.

MAURICE PEARLMAN

THE "RUSSIA" COMPLEX

First let me be precise about the phenomenon we are discussing. By a complex, psychologists do not mean either mere mental confusion or mixed feelings, but a state of mind which prevents a man from thinking or feeling straight, which inhibits his normal behaviour and is often concealed by elaborate rationalisation. Such states of mind are to be found in politics as well as in individual behaviour. The French, for instance, do not merely hate or fear the Germans. When they act as a nation, they have a complex about Germany, which expressed itself equally in the defeatism of Laval and the chauvinism of Poincaré. Even to-day, in the formulation of the French attitude towards the Ruhr, this complex counts for more than any rational assessment of facts. It is in this sense that I want to discuss our British complex about the Soviet Union.

Not many Conservatives suffer from it. They have violent prejudices about Russia, but their attitude is usually quite uncomplicated. When they want to get on with the Soviet Union—during the war, for instance—they persuade themselves that Communism is the true descendant of Czarism and that nothing has really changed. When, as is normal, their policy is anti-Russian, then Communism is the Antichrist. The man who is stone deaf cannot discriminate between a harmony and a discord: so he is not worried by the agonies of musical taste. In the same way, Russia is not a problem to people who are still unaware that, for good or for ill, the October Revolution began something new and revolutionary and that this revolution is still going on, inside and outside Russia. Thinking still in pre-Marxist terms and never having faced the intellectual and moral problems to which Arthur Koestler has given a classical formulation in *Darkness at Noon*, the Tory has neither qualms of conscience nor inhibitions in accepting the Truman Doctrine and in substituting Stalin for Hitler as the arch-aggressor. It all seems perfectly natural and self-evident to him.

The history of the Labour Movement prevents it from displaying this uncomplicated attitude to the Soviet Union. The emotional structure of parties, as of individuals, is determined by their early years. Labour's first independent action in

the sphere of foreign policy was the creation of the Councils of Action to prevent, by the threat of a general strike, the sale of armaments to the Poles. Men who to-day are respectable Cabinet Ministers, aldermen and party organisers, were revolutionary shop stewards in 1917 and in the great strikes of the early 1920's. Such men may seek to suppress the memories of the past, but they can never eradicate the effect on their political outlook of the "Ten Days Which Shook The World." Suddenly, the dreams which Socialists had attached more or less loosely to their own country, and rationalised by reading *Merrie England* or *News from Nowhere*, were almost forcibly transferred to the Soviet Union. For Christian Socialists, Russia became a Kingdom of God on earth, for Marxists a dictatorship of the proletariat, and for hundreds of thousands of respectable trade unionists, many of them with Nonconformist backgrounds, the hope of their own class. That is why the Labour Party, although since then it has been in almost uninterrupted conflict with the Communists and its faith has been undermined by Communist policy, still feels an attachment to the Soviet Union, all the stronger because it is remote, strange and slightly terrifying. Not only intellectuals but countless working-class Socialists want to think well of the Soviet Union and will give it the benefit of the doubt whenever they can. Their own reason, as well as the popular press, may tell them that Russia is now an aggressive totalitarian State, whose attempt to sabotage the Marshall Plan must be resisted. But in accepting this view they find themselves at war with themselves. They are involved, personally and inescapably by their own political past, in the Soviet Union. In a very precise sense, they suffer from a "Russia" complex.

We can observe something similar in the psychology of a younger generation of Socialists, those whose first political experience was Popular Front activity in the 1930's and support for the Republicans in Spain. As individuals, we can never escape from our childhood; nor, as citizens, from our initiation into politics. For this younger generation of Socialists, which is strongly represented in the present Parliament, united anti-Fascist action was the first experience of Socialism. They may now convince themselves by reason that a break with the Communists is essential and that the comrades of the Spanish War and the Resistance Movement must now be crushed; but such a policy leaves a psychological wound, compensated, as in the case of the successful careerist, by vulgar anti-Communism, or unconcealed, as with the unfortunate intellectual who cannot make up his mind. Here, too, we can legitimately speak of a "Russia" complex, which, just because it is below the level of reason, prevents a balanced judgment.

It will be a grave mistake if either the Government or the Party demands of the Labour Movement an uncompromising hostility to the Soviet Union and derides as "half-baked intellectuals" or as "cryptos" those who hesitate before jumping on the band-waggon of the anti-Communist crusade. No one should congratulate himself because his inner convictions are so adaptable that he can perform the intellectual antics demanded by the changes in Labour's official policy to Russia during the last ten years. An inability easily to resolve this conflict may be a sign not of weakness but of political maturity and of personal integrity.

But to say this is once again to over-simplify the problem. What makes the attitude of the British Labour Movement to Russia so baffling is its ambivalence. Though it has an emotional attachment to the Soviet Union, it has always been anti-Communist, and the British C.P. has proved an obstacle to Anglo-Soviet friendship because it is so obviously a foreign element in our national life. As such, it has created among many Labour leaders an anti-Communism not unlike anti-Semitism in its emotional violence.

We are back at the conflict between Utopia and reality. Socialists have been reluctant to measure Russian and German policies by the same yardstick, because in their philosophy Communism and Fascism were fixed as Heaven and Hell, abstract extremes between which lay the work-a-day Purgatory of practical politics. The Labour Movement felt the need of these two fixed points as the extremes of the yardstick by which political good and evil could be measured. It observed that, broadly speaking, the enemies of the British working class were anti-Communists and its friends anti-Fascists; and gradually it came to assume that the simplest and surest test of Left and Right and of good and evil was the strength of a politician's or a party's anti-Fascist or anti-Russian convictions. In this way a complex was rationalised into a philosophy.

During the '30s this rough-and-ready yardstick was by no means unintelligent. The supporters of Franco *were* the enemies of democracy; the advocates of the anti-Fascist alliance *were* its friends. And this was not a mere matter of strategic expediency. While Fascism offered the world nothing but a reversion to slavery, Communism, outside Europe and particularly in Asia, propounded to countless millions something genuinely progressive, even after the Moscow trials proved that Russia herself had gone wrong. Among the coloured peoples and in the Middle East the Communist revolution has just begun, just as the ideas of the French Revolution went on spreading long after Napoleon had perverted them into an instrument of despotism. The Socialist who fails to see this in his concern for the defence of Western Europe is like his ancestors whose intellectual courage was quenched by the orations of Burke and the excesses of the Jacobins. Seen in retrospect, Charles James Fox was a wiser man than Burke; and Tom Paine, a typical "Red" of his times, has outlived his persecutors. Before swallowing the views of the ex-Communists, who have become the prophets of anti-Communism, it is worth recalling the sad example of Wordsworth. Did not the aged pundit, reacting against the glorious visions of youth, purge the gold with the dross?

If we are to cure the "Russia" complex, instead of becoming anti-Communist or fellow-traveller neurotics, we must do two things. On the rational level we must change the yardstick by which we measure Left and Right; and on the irrational level we must break down the fixation of Russia as Utopia.

There is one factor which should make this task of self-examination a good deal easier. The emotional tie-up with the Soviet Union was intensified by the Labour Movement's sense of exclusion from national affairs. Socialists transferred their loyalty to Russia because patriotism seemed to be a Conservative monopoly. At one Labour Party conference in the '30s Jim Walker (who never suffered from anything so abstruse as a "Russia" complex) observed from the platform that there was more freedom under the Union Jack than anywhere else in the world. I shall never forget the storm of derision with which this remark was greeted by the floor. The delegates felt it not only an insult to their intelligence but an assault on their strongest political emotion. They were ready to make allowances for the Soviet Union, but for the British Empire never.

This sense of inferiority is fast vanishing. If we now dream of a Kingdom of God on earth it is rooted in these islands, in Western Europe or—most startling change of all—in schemes of colonial development. During the social revolution which began in 1945 and of which the Labour Government is the expression, the frontiers of our Socialist Utopia have been moved a thousand miles West. Instead of unconsciously and out of weakness relying on another power to change the world for us, we have taken on the job ourselves. We no longer need the myth of Soviet Russia to compensate for our sense of frustration.

But it is equally important that we should not replace it with an anti-Communist myth. We should be strong enough and self-confident enough to-day to face the realities of Communism without the hysteria of the Red-baiter or the self-deception of the fellow-traveller.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

I WISH I could disbelieve the very circumstantial report, published in *The Times* last week, that the British and French Governments approached the Washington Administration to ask whether it would be advisable to recall the Paris Conference while Congress is still discussing the Marshall Plan. This seems to me to illustrate precisely how *not* to handle our relations with America. Inevitably, Mr. Lovett said "No." But the reactions of newspapers which are friendly to us and close to the State Department make it pretty clear that what he wanted to say was: "If you will ask my permission, I must refuse. But why on earth ask me?" It was all the more surprising that Mr. Bevin adopted this procedure when we recall how very differently he reacted to Mr. Marshall's Harvard Speech. Instead of anxiously inquiring whether the Secretary of State really meant what he said, and whether Britain and France could go ahead, Mr. Bevin took an aeroplane to Paris and agreed with M. Bidault to call the conference. As a result, all America welcomed the European initiative. Everyone, both British and American, who has recently been in the States, agrees that what is needed to-day is a sign of vitality and independence on the part of the Sixteen Nations. The less we think and act for ourselves, the more the U.S.A. will be compelled against its own inclination to interfere in our affairs. The more we ask their permission, the less the Americans will consent; and finally, the more desperate we are for Marshall Aid, and the more we let our behaviour betray that desperation, the less aid will Congress vote.

* * *

The appointment of a solicitor, with no experience of education except his own, to the headmastership of Rugby has raised violent controversy. The Governing Body defends the appointment on the ground that the problems which the headmaster of a public school has to deal with to-day are not educational, but administrative. If that really be the case, a public school must be an odd kind of school. As a general rule, it is a great mistake to appoint outsiders to posts at the top of a profession, though there is something to be said for occasionally bringing them in somewhere lower down, if that is possible. The plums are always few, and it is therefore always difficult for the good man inside the profession to reach the top. Nothing could be more depressing to Major-Generals than to see a solicitor, without military experience, made a Field-Marshal. I can see no reason why a don or a schoolmaster should not be as good an administrator of a public school as a solicitor. After all, Lord Keynes was a don, and that remarkable headmaster, or highmaster, F. W. Walker, the "Old Man" of St. Paul's school, was an admirable administrator. Rugby itself, not so long ago, had in Dr. Vaughan an educationist who knew something about administration.

* * *

Bad administration in schools, colleges, and universities is generally due, not to having an educationist at the top, but to not having trained persons in non-educational, subordinate posts. For instance, one of the most extraordinary things is that, although since Eve induced Adam to eat the apple, catering has been one of the chief occupations of women, the food provided for women by women is almost always deplorable. The description of a meal in a women's Cambridge college in *A Room of One's Own* was no exaggeration, but it still holds good of at least one college (not in Cambridge) which I know. The food provided is inadequate and badly cooked. The main reason for this is that the catering is actually done by one of the women dons, whose real occupation is teaching. Here is precisely

the point at which one requires a trained administrator, not an educationist; catering and meals should be in the hands of a trained housekeeper under the supervision of an educationist, dignified perhaps with the name of bursar. The secret of good administration, whether in a public school or a public department, is to have trained experts supervised by non-experts. The cook and the housekeeper should be experts supervised by the don who cannot cook, but has to eat the dinners. So, too, the headmaster should be an expert educationist supervised by the Governing Body who are not trained educationists.

* * *

In his review this week of recent trade negotiations with a long series of Commonwealth and foreign countries, Mr. Harold Wilson presented a picture of British commercial diplomacy so active as to amount almost to a positive export policy aimed at funnelling our goods into markets where sales will do us most benefit, either by earning or by saving dollars. But though the impression conveyed is one of purposive planning in foreign trade, I have an uncomfortable feeling that it leaves out of account one factor over which the Government has little direct control—the attitude of the individual British exporter. You can advise him that this or that market is desirable in the national interest; but will he act on your advice if exports in other directions are more immediately profitable, or fit in better with the types of production he is trying to develop, or—quite simply—are less trouble? I hear, for example, from friends in Warsaw that, so far as Poland is concerned, the June, 1947, Trade Agreement is, in practice, working far from smoothly. Poland, they say, is keeping up to schedule with her promised deliveries; indeed, a new Food Mission is due shortly in London from Warsaw with offers of still larger supplies of eggs, bacon, poultry, sugar and timber. The trouble that has arisen lies in the difficulties which the Poles are experiencing in getting British manufacturers to accept their orders for the capital goods and equipment which they were promised under the Agreement. They complain, not only that they cannot get assurances of delivery within a reasonable time, but that British manufacturers are reluctant to accept Polish orders, and are quoting exceptionally high prices—on the ground, apparently, that the Export Credits Department of the Board of Trade is charging heavily to cover the spreading over three years of the 40 per cent. deferred payment which was one of the provisions of the 1947 Agreement. It seems to me clearer than ever that, if the Government wants its "planned" Trade Agreements to work out as intended, it will have to set up a purchasing agency which will buy from British manufacturers the goods required to carry out our part in the various bilateral bargains which Mr. Wilson is negotiating.

* * *

Town Meetings to discuss provisions of Bills, which local authorities wish to present to Parliament, seem at first sight to be an attractive exercise of local democracy. Their drawback is that usually the disputed issues, although they may be important, do not have sufficient dramatic quality to stimulate more than a fraction of the population into voting at the subsequent Town Poll, when the fate of the contended clauses is decided. And those who do vote are largely people who stand to lose financially, or think they do, by the retention of the clauses. Hence the rally of the free enterprise diehards which always takes place on these occasions. In the recent Town Poll in Birmingham exactly 6.7 per cent. of the electorate voted, and the council was defeated by five to one on two clauses which had received an all-party approval within the council itself. For many years the Birmingham Corporation has hired out furniture to municipal tenants which, by law, can never become their property. The council wanted to take powers to sell the furniture as well as to hire it out in perpetuity. They also, very reasonably in view of the poor quality and inadequacy of Birmingham hotels, wished to start a municipal hotel that might be a credit to the city. In both cases vested interests decided otherwise.

* * *

Will the same thing happen in Coventry? There, eight clauses of a proposed Bill have been disputed by a Town Meeting, and a poll will be held on January 28. Every one of the powers desired by Coventry is already possessed by other towns. Rochdale has an excellent municipal taxi service. All respectable Tory seaside towns have their Winter Gardens and concert halls. Even capitalist New York has its district heating, and it is sheer retrogressive madness to rebuild the centre of Coventry without installing such a system in its office blocks. Other admirable projects on which the Coventry Council has set its heart are a radio re-diffusion service, a municipal hotel, and municipal laundries and washhouses. Unless the Coventry Labour Party can do a great deal better than their Birmingham colleagues none of them will get past the rock of the Town Poll. In a referendum of this type, the "antis" are always more easy to mobilise than the "pros." Surely it is time that the Government implemented Labour Party policy by introducing a Bill giving authority to councils to engage on a wider list of undertakings without reference to Parliament. One way of doing it might be to allow local authorities to do anything for which any other local authority has already obtained parliamentary sanction.

* * *

Until a few months ago it was still possible to ride in a hansom cab in London, but surely only the brave, the naive, or the eccentric could have faced it out. Nowadays it demands these qualities to have your shoes cleaned by one of London's rare shoeblacks. I tried this the other day, and felt like an Asiatic despot until I realised that I might as well feel American. This is a social institution that has crossed to the New World, where cheerful and healthy negroes of all ages serve modern Americans in the capacity allotted by our Victorian forbears to crippled boys. Shoeblacking may be an ancient institution, but it was first established as a "protected" industry at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. A man known as "Rob Roy MacGregor," a teacher in one of the Shaftesbury Society's Ragged Schools, saw the Exhibition as an opportunity to give employment to a large number of London's crippled boys; and under the Society's auspices he organised them into a Shoeblack Detachment. (His other distinction was to go round the world in a canoe and write a book about it: the canoe is still at the Shaftesbury Society's offices.) After the Exhibition, the Detachment became a "Shoeblack Brigade," with four Divisions serving the whole of central London; and in 1867 its members were registered and given badges by the Police. Before Hitler's war London shoeblacks had nearly died out. They re-emerged in considerable numbers when the American troops came, but now they have once more relinquished their brushes and footstools—which they obtain from the Shaftesbury Society. The one who cleaned my shoes the other day was on the taciturn side, and it was with difficulty that I maintained the appearance of earnest conversation by means of which I sought to mitigate an uneasy conspicuousness. Once only did he approach loquacity. It was when he caught sight of a passing pair of suède brogues.

* * *

Mr. Churchill is usually credited with the authorship of the phrase "Iron Curtain," and I have shared the belief that he did in fact coin this slogan. I find, however, that I was wrong; Mr. Churchill was anticipated by Count Schwerin von Krosick, Foreign Minister in the short-lived Doenitz Government. Broadcasting from Flensburg on May 2nd, 1945, von Krosick called for an anti-Bolshevik crusade to prevent "the iron curtain in the East" from being pushed westwards. The Count's words have had a longer life than his own career as German Foreign Minister.

POLYCRITIC

HOMES, SWEET HOMES!

The Children's Homes of England,
How scandalous they were,
How sure to warp and undermine
The infant character!
Now more enlightened counsels
Will end this ancient ill,
And England gives approval
To the homeless children's Bill.

The Children's Homes of England,
Subsisting on the rates
Excelled in the production
Of hardened reprobates;
Their careful moral teaching
Appeared a waste of time
When children left their shelter
To teach their elders crime.

For waifs and strays of England
A better era starts,
A pledge of bright surroundings
Well staffed with kindly hearts;
The Council is their father,
The Treasury their aunt,
And rates are supplemented
By an Exchequer grant.

In Children's Homes of England
Improvements must be seen,
The Councils how penurious!
The Treasury how mean!
In this most generous measure
A great advance is made—
But Homes must have priority,
And kind hearts must be paid!

The Bill will lift from England
A sense of public guilt,
But kind hearts must be mobilised
And Homes are still unbuilt;
The troubled public conscience
Feels satisfaction deep—
It is not hard to waken,
But soon it goes to sleep.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of those printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Two men arrested for trying to buy gold from a supposed black-marketeer, who turned out to be a police inspector, have been released after proving that they too were police inspectors masquerading as black-market operators.—*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.* (T. A. Cairns.)

The following instruction has been issued by the Treasury:—

(a) A woman employed in an established capacity should in the event of a confinement be allowed two months leave on full pay reckoning against her normal sick leave entitlement . . .

(c) In the case of unmarried women the above directions should not normally be applied to the same officer more than once.—*The Post.* (N. L. Rayner.)

Although the Christian New Year occurs in the middle of the ballet year, it is still a useful point at which to sit back and take stock.—*World Ballet News.* (Mrs. P. F. Newton.)

Mr. J. R. Roberts, chairman of St. Mawgan Parish Council, said that at the parish church about 3,000 persons had signed the visitors' book in the three summer months. There was no public convenience available.—*The Cornish Guardian* (P. A. Wailes.)

The conditions in which this family were living were described as "a mother, father and four children living in one room, the mother expecting another baby."

"These people must like living in these conditions, otherwise there would not be another baby coming."—*Muswell Hill Record.* (Dr. A. Johnston Abraham.)

FARMERS AND CROP TARGETS

THE much-advertised agricultural expansion programme is not going too well. Mr. Tom Williams, who is doing all that a mere Minister can, *may* manage to step up the net output of our farms by an average of 20 per cent. by the 1952 harvest. That is his ultimate objective; and, of course, in farming anything is possible. But most of the immediate targets do not look like being realised. The fact, with all its implications, needs to be faced.

Only five specific targets have been set for this year. They are for *wheat* (a 13 per cent. increase on last year's acreage, but almost a million acres less than the 1943 crop); for *potatoes* (a restoration of the 1946 acreage, i.e., an increase of 8 per cent. on 1947); for *sugar beet* (an 8 per cent. increase on the 1947 acreage, but a substantially smaller total acreage than in any of the five years, 1942-6); for *linseed* (a crop hitherto grown on a small scale but invaluable because of its high protein content); and for *grass* (a 20 per cent. "increase in productivity"; what this means, if anything, has not yet been explained). Except for the last item it is not an ambitious programme, but of the five targets only the sugar beet acreage seems to be assured. Linseed is a spring-sown crop, but the County Agricultural Executive Committees and the local branches of the National Farmers' Union—through whom the targets funnel down from the Ministry of Agriculture—are finding it difficult to persuade farmers to promise even a small acreage. Linseed, however, is not a key crop like wheat and potatoes. It seems certain, unfortunately, that the wheat target will not be reached. A writer in one of the farming weeklies recently estimated that only 70 per cent. of the target acreage will eventually prove to have been planted.

If this guess is anywhere near being right, it will mean that the wheat acreage, so far from showing an increase, will be back to the 1939 level. Nor will the whole crop necessarily be available for human consumption. As a special inducement, when he launched his programme in August, Mr. Williams rather rashly promised the wheat and barley growers that they would be allowed to retain one-fifth of the grain for feeding to their own livestock. We may find ourselves in the fantastic position of having less home-grown bread-corn than before the war in spite of the expansion programme and the high prices it has brought the corn-grower, and in spite of the 235,000 tractors (as against 55,000 in 1939) which have made this country's agriculture the most highly mechanised in the world.

The wheat fiasco makes it all the more important for the potato target to be achieved. In terms of calories, an acre of potatoes will replace two acres of wheat, assuming average yields for both crops, though it is an expensive way to get the calories as an acre of wheat can be grown for £15 or less, whereas an acre of potatoes may cost £60. But the potato target is not by any means "in the bag." On January 8, Mr. Williams had to come to the microphone to appeal to farmers to grow more potatoes, and this appeal was preceded by a personal letter signed by the Minister himself, which was sent out to more than 20,000 of the bigger potato-growers

In the end, I expect, the target will be reached. The price is an attractive one, and the acreage payment of £12 an acre for the first ten acres on each farm, with £8 an acre for each subsequent acre, acts as a gratuitous insurance against the weather. Moreover, the farmers' leaders know the political importance of the crop. They have promised the Government enough potatoes to end the need for a potato ration, and on this understanding Mr. Williams has instructed his County Committees not to serve the hated "directions." If the potatoes do not materialise, there will be some embarrassing moments for the N.F.U.'s executive committee (who are honest men according to their lights).

But it will be a near thing. And 74,000 more acres of potatoes (the target for England and Wales) will not make up for 400,000 fewer acres of wheat, as there will be if only 70 per cent. of the wheat acreage is obtained. No, the expansion programme is not going well. It is time for a candid friend to get Mr. Williams, whom we all like, into a corner and tell him why.

One reason why British agriculture is not pulling its weight to-day is the "B" farmer. This is not a term of abuse; it is the official classification. In 1940 when the War Committees, as they were then, began the National Farm Survey, they were told to grade each farm according as it was (a) farmed well, (b) farmed moderately, (c) farmed badly. The three categories are now an essential part of the administrative machine, and it is the ambition of every County Committee to turn its C farmers into B farmers and its B farmers into A farmers. The B farmers, who are more than half all the farmers in England and Wales (it is a different story in Scotland) have been particularly successful in resisting the metamorphosis.

The B farmers are thickest on the ground in the mixed farming areas of the Midlands. It was precisely in these areas that the Ministry of Agriculture hoped to obtain its extra potato acreage (as well as the wheat), the menace of the potato eelworm having kept the specialist areas, such as the Isle of Ely and the Holland Division of Lincolnshire, down to their pre-war acreages. But the B farmer was not interested. The B farmer does not like potatoes or the Ministry of Agriculture, which invents forms to plague him. He dislikes all Governments and his feelings for the present Government approach an hysterical hatred. Politically he is, of course, a Tory, and there is a significant coincidence between the mixed farming areas (as shown, for example, on the Ministry of Agriculture's "Types of Farming" map) and the counties with the highest Conservative majorities in 1945.

But the sabotaging of Mr. Williams's programme goes deeper than political prejudice. The B farmer is really a survivor from an older form of society. That is why he is so attractive to talk to. His loud laugh, his emotional sincerity, his vivid Anglo-Saxon monosyllables, his contempt for appearances—they add up in many ways to an admirable human being. But of the economic problems of the post-war world and the techniques of modern agriculture this peasant—for that is what the B farmer is—knows as much as a new-born baby.

The best book that has been written on the English peasant is "George Bourne's" *Change in the Village* (1912). If I were Mr. Williams, it is a book I would insist on every official in my Ministry reading. The gulf that separates a potato target worked out in Whitehall, with every refinement of statistical method, from the actual farmers who are to grow the potatoes, especially the small-acreage men, is a gulf between two civilisations; and a realisation of that fact must be the basis of all agricultural planning. To "George Bourne" the central fault of the peasant system was its failure to stimulate the intellect. The peasant, he points out, is only concerned with day-to-day details and has almost no power of generalising or of tracing causes and effects. Book-learning, therefore, seems unimportant to him and he finds it difficult to absorb.

The point need not be elaborated. It is obviously true. And here lies the explanation of the familiar gap between agricultural science and agricultural practice. The experts at Rothamsted, Shinfield and the other research centres do not speak the same language as the B farmers. What we need is more men like the best District Officers of the County Committees, who can *translate* the objectives of Whitehall into simple concrete terms. As a beginning they might start on the forms. It would not be difficult to devise one omnibus quarterly return that would supply officialdom with all the information it requires, and that the farmer could make the record of an expansion programme on his own farm. I know, because I did it during the war. If Mr. Williams would take up this question of agricultural forms, I am sure he would win more converts to his programme than by any number of broadcast appeals and personal letters.

It is difficult for the townsman to realise how physically painful peasants find it to put pen to paper. Culturally they are still at the pre-literate stage, and they resent intensely the forces of history that have subjected them to the official mind and its contorted polysyllabic jargon. No doubt in the end they will have to come to terms with the modern world. But, in the meantime, whence do we get our wheat and potatoes?

F. W. BATESON

CHINA'S CIVIL WAR

I.—THE BACKGROUND

(The writer, an Austrian doctor, worked in China from 1939 to 1947, first as medical advisor to the Chinese Red Cross and other health organisations of the Central Government, subsequently on the staff of Unrra. In those capacities he travelled widely both in Kuomintang and Liberated areas.)

RETURNING to Europe after eight years in China, I find a widespread impression that the Chinese civil war is a war, on Chinese soil, between American and Russian influences. Such a conception of the struggle is wide of the truth. The Americans, of course, have taken an active part in lending support to Chiang Kai-shek; but foreign intervention in the civil war has been entirely one-sided. The Russians have adhered strictly to the letter of their international agreements relating to China; diligent search will fail to discover a single Russian in the Liberated areas; and the Chinese Communist Party is very conscious of the fact that its most valuable political possession is its status as a national Chinese Party—a title worth much more to it than the problematic gain of a few Russian rifles. From first to last, the struggle in China—culminating inevitably (as I see it) in civil war—has been the essentially Chinese issue of feudalism *versus* "new democracy."

Few Europeans, I find, realise what the centuries-old feudalism of China means. It means, on the one hand, landlordism which exacts from 50 to 80 per cent. of crop values in rent; systematic exploitation of the people by corrupt government officials and the misuse of police and judicial power for personal ends; and the domination of the country's economy by merchant bankers and merchant generals whose wealth has been accumulated out of hoarding and speculating, illegal confiscation and requisitioning. It means, on the other hand, the dark, bitter evenings in peasant huts unlighted because there is no vegetable oil for the wick; the yearly seasonal famine before the new crop is reaped; the marginal existence of countless millions to whom any unforeseen mishap spells starvation and death; the endlessly recurring problem of the peasant family stricken by Kala Azar, which can only afford the money to pay for the cure of one member, the strongest, so that he may work while the rest, without medical aid, may at least eat.

This feudalism in China could survive as long as it did because peasant revolutions were again and again beaten with foreign help. Moreover, the magnitude of China, an atomised society of numberless small communities, made it extremely difficult to organise, in peasants' revolts, a base large enough for prolonged warfare, offensive as well as defensive. This has now been accomplished, for the first time in China's history, by the Chinese Communist Party, whose success is due to the effective use it made of the special conditions created during the Second World War. Whereas the great feudal families of China, using the Kuomintang Party as their instrument, sought and secured, during the war, a tighter monopoly of political and economic power, they were opposed at last by a new *démocracie massive*—not strictly Socialist, but based on re-distribution of land in peasant ownership, administration by

elected village committees, a great drive to wipe out illiteracy, and a determination to develop, through State enterprises and industrial and agricultural co-operatives, an economy in which there would be no room for feudal poverty or feudal privilege.

Between feudalism and the "new democracy" the final struggle was inevitable; the differences admitted of no compromise. For a moment, when the Sino-Japanese war began in 1937, it looked as though national unity might be brought about. The Communist Party renounced its policy of expropriating landlords, and replaced it by advocacy of a system of reduced but guaranteed rents, in order not to alienate any class which could contribute to the war effort. The Kuomintang Government invited the Communist leaders, Mao Tze-tung and Chou En-lai, to take part in the newly organised Peoples' Political Council, and undertook to equip and pay a number of Communist armies. The liberal middle-class, consisting of a small but vocal group of intellectuals and some industrialists in Shanghai and other cities, hailed with enthusiasm what they thought was a new era of political freedom. When I first visited the front in Hunan in 1939 I found groups of young Chinese intellectuals living with the troops, writing letters for them, educating and stimulating them. Dr. Lim, director of the Chinese Red Cross, had brought up to the front line a group of doctors who had fought in the Spanish civil war. The morale of the soldiers was high; their commanders seemed to be in earnest; the Communists were actively organising guerrillas behind the enemy's lines, and a trickle of arms and money was still being supplied to them by Chiang Kai-shek.

Two years later the picture had completely changed. Most of the young patriotic intellectuals were in Kuomintang concentration camps. The commander of the Army in Hupeh, to which I was then attached, forbade any military operations which might interfere with his profitable smuggling trade with the enemy. Dr. Lim was in Chungking, being grilled by the Generallissimo for harbouring "subversive persons" in his medical organisation—the doctors from Spain being No. 1 exhibit. There had been the "incident" in the New Fourth Army, when 10,000 Communist troops had been massacred by the army of General Ku Tsu-tung, on the direct orders of Ho Ying-chin, the Minister of War. It was only too apparent that the reactionary feudal forces, who had grudgingly assented to the administration being given a liberal tinge in the first flush of the patriotic war, had re-asserted their monopoly power over the Government and the Kuomintang Party.

This was due partly to the fact that the liberal groups, both within and outside the Kuomintang, had lost their economic basis. The industrialists who had counted themselves "progressive" had either become collaborators in order to save their factories, or they had emigrated with the Central Government into the interior, thus becoming passive clients of Chiang Kai-shek's purse. The same thing happened to the intellectuals who joined the exodus into the "Big Rear"; they became dependent on the Government for their daily bowl of rice, and Chen Li-fu, the Fascist-minded Kuomintang Minister of Education, used the economic whip to enforce political servitude on professors and students alike.

On the other hand, the power of China's "bureaucratic capital" was enhanced. The big agricultural hinterland could still be bled by the tax collector; shortages made hoarding and speculation more profitable than ever; trading with the enemy brought princely rewards; and the peasantry could be profitably squeezed by the corrupt agents who carried out the conscription law. The feudal families, re-entrenched round Chiang Kai-shek, more and more based their war strategy on a policy of waiting for the Western Powers to beat the Japanese and meanwhile bottling up the Communist Army in the North-west corner of China. For popular grumbling the remedies were "thought control," concentration camps and the tender mercies of the Secret Police.

Meanwhile, the Communists had put the war years to effective use. Vast stretches of land behind the Japanese lines had been transformed into guerrilla areas, where local democratic administrations were organised. The initial steps which were taken towards land reform, through reduction of rents and sales of parts of the (now less profitable) big holdings to landless peasants, had made millions in the Liberated areas regard the Communist Party as a liberator in a political as well as a military sense.

Could an accommodation between the Communists and the Kuomintang have been reached in 1945? The Communists certainly made an effort to secure a peaceful settlement. They recalled all their troops who were then stationed south of the Yangtse, and offered to agree to a unification of all Chinese military forces under a central command. Their one stipulation was that the Central Government must be democratised and that, pending a general election, the local administrative bodies in the Liberated areas must be recognised. To Chiang Kai-shek these terms were unacceptable. He realised at once that land reform and "village democracy" would cut at the very roots of the economic basis of feudalism. Counting on American support, and having at his disposal huge dumps of delivered, but unused, American war equipment, he was not disposed to listen to the "moderates" in the Kuomintang, or even to General Marshall. The "new democracy," he decided, could, and must, be suppressed by force of arms. Blood was his argument: the stage was set for the civil war.

FRITZ JENSEN

(To be concluded)

RATS

RAT-NIBBLED apples recently led "Critic," in his Diary, to suggest the employment of a few scientists to work out a plan of rat extermination. He could not believe that it would be too difficult for them. He was quite right. The same idea had occurred to some Oxford scientists in September, 1939, and, with an attempt at blockade imminent, the Ministries of Food and Agriculture agreed. In 1939 there was astonishingly little reliable knowledge about our most familiar pests, the rats and mice. There was an extensive mythology, but anecdotes about rat wisdom are not a sound basis for administrative action to exterminate them. An objective criterion of effectiveness was needed.

This we now have; we owe it to the Oxford Bureau of Animal Population, whose members—at ordinary times academic zoologists—spent the war working on problems of applied biology. You cannot count rats accurately by direct means; if you could, it would be simple to count them before and after the application of a control method and so get a figure of percentage kill. The method of census eventually devised involves the laying of a standard food (usually dry wheat) for some days during which the amount the rats eat daily increases to a fairly constant level. This level is an index of the rat population. A control method is then applied and the census repeated. There are many complications in the application of this method and in the interpretation of results; but it gives us for the first time a means of testing the claims of different baiting methods, different poisons, fumigation by poison gas, trapping, and all the other weapons in the armoury of the rat-catcher.

The method that has stood up best to scientific investigation is poisoning. But the haphazard laying of poison baits is of little use. The baiting technique now used is based on the study of the behaviour of rats when they are faced with an unfamiliar food, or with food in an unfamiliar place. Rats tend to avoid anything new, harmless or otherwise. No doubt this accounts for a good deal of their reputation for intelligence: if you put down traps and they avoid them, you are likely to be impressed. In fact, of course, this automatic conservatism is anything but intelligent. An unfamiliar poison bait will probably be avoided at first, and later nibbled, like "Critic's" apples. If only a small amount is taken, the rat, though made sick, may survive. After that, he may avoid any of the materials used in making up the offending bait: he will be "bait shy," and correspondingly more difficult to poison. The remedy is to lay plain bait for some nights before poisoning; after four or five nights the rats will overcome their initial avoidance, and when poison is added they will eat it enthusiastically, and die. If a few rats are left, the same procedure has to be gone through again, but with different materials, so that any shyness which may have developed is overcome.

That, very briefly, is the scientific answer to "Critic's" problem. It took some years to get, but it was when research results had come in that the difficulties really began. Rats are found in every type of environment in which we allow food—waste or otherwise—to be exposed: ricks, warehouses, larders, sewers and so on. At the centre all rodent control is to-day the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture's Infestation Control Division. Its task is to get the right scientific methods rigorously applied everywhere.

Just as an army operating in the midst of a friendly population is at an advantage, so those professionally concerned with pest control need the help of the public. Probably nobody in this country would (as happens in India) release rats from cage traps, owing to reluctance to see them killed. But there are still plenty of obstacles. For many, including some farmers, rats are as inevitable as the weather. Many more prefer to rely on folk-lore or their own casual observation as guides to action, rather than new-fangled scientific methods. The need for public action is recognised in the fact that an occupier is legally responsible for disinfesting his premises if they harbour rats or mice. "Critic's" first action on finding his shed infested should have been to inform the Local Health Authority. Perhaps, in a village, it would have turned out that the County Agricultural Committee was the body which could supply skilled attention. That he was not aware of this illustrates the need for the publicity campaigns which have been run by the Ministry of Food and by Local Authorities, and also the fact that more are required.

This problem of bringing effectively together the activities of research workers, administrators, operators and the public, in order to apply scientific methods, is an old one. We have known for decades how to prevent diseases such as typhoid and smallpox, but only a minority of the population of the world has so far benefited because many countries lack the necessary administrative machinery and an educated public. With pests such as rats there is plenty more research to be done, but it is the social and administrative problems that are the more formidable.

ANTHONY BARNETT

TREE 1947

LIVING now in myself the end of the world
I watch a tree with dry and shrivelled leaves
That curl slowly like fronds of fern-paper.

This is the tree that grew from sleep to Eden,
Bore blossom and babe, and a million million summers
Its leaves have whispered passion's language to lovers,

And every spring has hung
The incarnate god bleeding among its branches
Whose dying is eternal as the vine.

Now all deaths have been died,
Nature has no more wombs for generation,
Roof-tree and lintel of the world are broken,
And the tree stands, a portent, at my door.

Now when the ash is shaking down its last fruits
I call to mind the spring, the lost innocence
Of flowers and lovers, beautiful agents of creation.

This tree they raised, whose tinder now is dry,
Waiting for the ungenerated seed of fire
To burst into the last flowering of the world.

KATHLEEN RAINE

A WEEK-END IN THE COUNTRY

She was holding the telegram in her hand as he came into the room. Grandmother's dead, she said. There was no expression on her face, either of grief, or satisfaction or of a fear removed. He did not know what it meant to her. Yet, he said to himself, remembering suddenly the dusty brown drawing-room, the dying fire and the clear pool of candlelight, there was a moment when I understood it all. Let me think back, he said, to that glow of understanding months ago: perhaps I can relight it, perhaps the light of it will wake her up.

Of course she had been afraid: Lisa had always been afraid of that visit, introducing the new life to the old. It had been hanging in the air for so long and she had thought so much about it. Again and again she had told me about the piles of newspapers and the dripping candles and the coal under the kitchen table and the great pyramid and the Archbishop of Canterbury: preparing me for the shock. But I would never take it seriously enough to satisfy her. She was afraid that when I saw it all I would hate it so much I would hate her for having been a part of it. And to me, of course, it was not wholly disagreeable that she should have her little romantic story, have been brought up by a maddish grandmother in a tumble-down house. And this made her angry, for how could I know, she would think, what it was really like for a child, the oddness, the loneliness, the accumulating piles of dusty objects, cardboard boxes, newspapers that could never be thrown away, blocking all the windows, and the dead grandfather's cigarette smoke drifting through the passages. How could I know, she would think, brought up with sisters in a suburban garden, bourgeois and decent, all the cupboards scrubbed clean and the skeletons thrown away every springtime.

The old lady wanted us to come. She wanted to see Lisa again before I took her off, wanted even to see me. She could not bear that anyone should escape wholly from her clutches. Besides, she wanted to talk; there was always the hope that I would listen. There was her secret, the fruit of years of fumbling around among Elizabethan quartos with cabbalistic signs in colophon and title-page, folios marked with the vesica, obscure booklets by maniacs, printed on bad paper by unheard-of publishers: no one would listen, no one could understand. Perhaps I might be the one she could tell it to.

Popular education, she said, that was the ruin of everything. The village children scribbled on her gate, and she hated them, for their insults and because they could write. Apprentice sorcerers mocking the real sage. Learning to her was still the half-fearful twilight magic that it was to Faust. She battened on her husband's learning before he died, before she killed him. For she did kill him: poor, decent, scholarly man, he couldn't stand the pace, the jumps were too high, he cracked up early. And where he left off she began. Shakespearean criticism led to Bacon and the cypher; Bacon to the Freemasons, thence to the Rosicrucians and more ambiguous fraternities: their discourses were collated with the secrets of the great pyramid; and these, considered in relation to the patent wisdom of the stars, led to the knowledge that would make possible and safe the entry of the world into the aquarian age; but led, too, to the discovery of the vast conspiracy in which all the forces of organised enlightenment from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the *Daily Express* were involved, the conspiracy to hide the truth and discredit its possessors, the plot in which even the dustman and chimney-sweep and the village children joined. Suspicion, concealment everywhere. Once she had gone about, attended meetings, consorted with others of the illuminati; but one by one they had died or deserted, or were poisoned by the infected air of the age and fell into heresy: it was not worth while to go out now. So she never left the house, and the briars grew over the back gate, the big pear tree was blown down in a gale, convolvulus made the garden into a jungle, but she never saw it, and when told of it put it down to the Pope or to the Jews.

Before Lisa's mother had left her to go back to India it had been different. There had been maids and a man to do the garden, the green peas and the lettuces grew seriously in rows, the meals came at proper times, the sun shone orderly through polished windows. But after the grandfather died things began to change: alive, he had smoked innumerable cigarettes; now that he was dead, wisps of cigarette smoke used to float along the passages. This frightened the maids and one by one they left. Dust began to settle over everything; the big mirror in the drawing-room cracked and no one mended it; the flowers died in the conservatory and they put the firewood there; the dining-room began to look too big to eat in and was used for storing apples. They mouldered on the mahogany, and the old lady sat in her study, reading and marking papers with blue pencil, and laughing to herself about the cypher and the Earl of Leicester.

That night we sat in the drawing-room: the chairs had their seats out and a little Sheraton table lay with its legs in the air like a drowned puppy. The wallpaper was delicate chinoiserie; something delicate and pretty and tenderly alive had lived here once, now gone away or smothered by dust. We looked at family photographs, album after album, old straw-hatted groups, women in bustles, a dead world incapable of resurrection. Then page after page of pictures of the same girl, pensive and alone, in graceful dresses, with a fan, with roses, with a wide, drooping hat, but always remote, shut in, *la belle au bois dormante*, Lisa's mother. Then I knew who had left the faint odour of youth and grace behind in the dusty drawing-room. The same girl in a wedding group, and then she disappeared: a few faded snapshots, a rickshaw, palm trees, faint echoes of a new life in a far country.

Lucky to have escaped, to have got away with her own husband, to her own home, to a new life in a new country: the rickshaws, the palm trees, the hot sunshiny beaches, the waves breaking in the monsoon.

But why, when the time came, had she sent Lisa back? Of course, you cannot keep children in the East: they grow pale, they pine, strong waters and the passions come too early to their notice, they walk in jungles and converse with monsters. Perhaps there was nowhere else to send her; perhaps those who escape hardly from their own childhood often try to return to it, and if they cannot return themselves, do so by proxy. Lisa anyway came back and inherited her mother's childhood, the cupboards full of toys, the shelves full of books, for nothing was ever thrown away in that house. She inherited the loneliness, too, for to play with the village children was impossible: one could not speak to the Poyntons because of the quarrel about the five-acre field; and the girls at the rectory were tabu because their father was an ignorant ass who had spoken disrespectfully of the great cypher. Bits of the old order, accomplishments, lingered on: she played the piano, sang, was prematurely introduced to some of the politer tongues of Europe. In between times she fled into the garden and played in the mud around the duck pond. Soon the polite accomplishments were absorbed in the stronger flood of occult learning: she was taken to meetings in back rooms in London; she listened to nothing and knitted jumpers for her dolls; stray fragments of secret history were imparted to her at meals, and she made her mind a blank. Gradually the habit of not listening became confirmed, and the conviction that whatever was found in books was almost certainly frowsty and queer and quite certainly an unwanted intrusion on one's privacy: to make one's mind a blank was clearly the safest thing. What the world outside was like she hardly knew, she only saw it through the garden fence. But that it was different from this she always knew: she always knew there was somewhere to escape into if you could only do it. She could see that her grandmother was not like real people, not like the people outside. She began to notice that she was queer and dirty and shabby and laughed loudly in trains: when they went to London she was ashamed of her, and ashamed of being ashamed.

We had put the photographs away, and tried to light a fire. But the chimney smoked, the wood was damp and it expired in a chilly glimmer. Some of Lisa's old dolls and a picture book that she had taken from the nursery were lying on the floor. She sat at the piano tinkling the keys and singing fragments of a song—*Mein liebchen ist verschwunden* . . . She was trying to pick up small bits of happiness from her uncertain cloudy childhood. Her voice, and the tinkly old piano were apple blossom petals blowing away one by one on a spring wind; her face in the candlelight was pale, soft and alive against the dusty stained-glass window. Like finding a narcissus on a rubbish heap, among the tin cans and the broken bottles. Take me away, she said; in a way I have loved this place, all my toys are hidden in these cupboards, in a way I have loved her, all my childhood has lain in her lap, but take me away, before the dust settles on me, too.

But to go away is never the whole answer. You can go away to China or to Mexico, but unless you have freed yourself before you go, you will only come back again. And there was a moment when all this was clear to me, and her heart and mine and the old woman's were all transparent. There was something I should have done, some dragon I should have killed; but I did not do it. What is the use of seeing into the heart if your actions never get below the skin? Simply to go away, the obvious blundering thing, leaving each one shut in a private vacuum: to see the connection and not to join the wires. So the moment passed, and the warmth of understanding faded into a weak ill-temper. I hated the house and her grandmother and everything that had made a barrier of fear between us, and we went away on the bus on a wet afternoon, and the old woman returned to her private purgatory: nothing settled, an escape with strings to it, the sleeping beauty out of the wood, but not yet wakened up.

Graham Hough

THE SIRENS' WELCOME TO RED-FACED CRONOS

Cronos Odysseus, steer your boat
Toward Silver Island whence we sing:
Here you shall pass your days.

Through a thick-growing alder-wood
We clearly see, but are not seen,
Hid in a golden haze.

Our hair the hue of barley sheaf,
Our eyes the hue of blackbird's egg,
Our cheeks like asphodel.

Here the wild apple blossoms yet;
Wrens in the silver branches play
And prophesy you well.

Here nothing ill or harsh is found.
Cronos Odysseus, steer your boat
Across these placid straits,

With each of us in turn to lie
Taking your pleasure on young grass
That for your coming waits.

No grief nor gloom, sickness nor death,
Disturbs our long tranquillity;
No treachery, no greed.

Compared with this, what are the plains
Of Elis, where you ruled as king?
A wilderness indeed.

A starry crown awaits your head,
A hero feast is spread for you:
Swineflesh, milk and mead.

Robert Graves

The Arts and Entertainment

THE MOVIES

"Easy Money" and "Is Everybody Listening?" at the Gaumont and the Marble Arch Pavilion

"Night Beat," at the Empire

Of the two English films which provide this week's fare, *Easy Money* is both the more English and the far better piece. Its topic is "the pools," that appeal to the national spirit by which punter, sportsman and form-filler are ingeniously rolled into one. Subject for a *This Modern Age* number; and in fact *Easy Money*, directed by Bernard Knowles, blossoms brightly from its documentary impulse. We watch form-fillers and form-checkers at work; a lucky combination turns up; the winner receives a visit from "our representative," who has arranged for the Mayor to hand over the cheque, and so on. Or perhaps there has been some hanky-panky through the medium of someone inside the office: in that case a Scotland Yard officer will look in too. There are four distinct anecdotes or dramas in *Easy Money*, showing us what happened in turn to each of four winners, and if none very deeply engages the attention, all these tales have life-like and ingenious twists. I shan't disclose any of the plots, because this is a film that depends a good deal on our never knowing quite how things will turn out. The first and most substantial episode gives a high-spirited account of the warfare that can break out in small surburbia at the news of £20,000; Mr. Jack Warner gives one of his brisk, solid performances as Dad, and one of the funniest bits of love-making I have ever seen is provided by Mr. David Tomlinson as the irreproachable young gentleman who can be a devil when roused. The pannelled dining-room, granny, and the call of cricket are very nice too. It is so unusual for English films to make one laugh that perhaps I feel a little more gratitude to *Easy Money* than it deserves. Episode two amuses only mildly; three is the expected night-club turn; but again, with four, the wish-fulfilment of a double-bass player (Edward Rigby), we soar into endearing farce. This little anecdote, which sends us away happy, will stick in my memory, along with the two golfers from *Dead of Night* and parts of *Blithe Spirit*, as forerunners of the fantasy that might—but alas so rarely does—satisfy our appetite for fun.

In the same programme *The March of Time*, at the top of its form, makes a rapid and impartial survey of broadcasting in America. Despite the impartiality which tries to balance Toscanini and *Hiroshima* with soap-serials, quizzes and background music, the verdict comes down pretty sharply against commercial radio. Bits of it, surprised at work in the studio, are as funny as anything in Bob Hope or Jack Benny.

The only English things about *Night Beat* are the policemen's uniforms and the accents: Cockney-plated Kensington that is always showing through. Otherwise this is the story we have met so often before—and in happier circumstances—of the boss's office at the top of the staircase leading up from the club. Downstairs a new blonde (Christine Norden) perambulates her sad ballad; upstairs the boss (Maxwell Reed), looking on from a porthole, dispenses cheques and can, when the time comes, be prettily murdered. Two ex-Commandos, a village street painted on cloth, and the necessary wharfside below London Bridge help to plump out the scene. All the characters seem to have been brought up on *Peg's Paper*. Pity, because at moments near the beginning we have been given some genuine glimpses of policemen in training.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

RADIO NOTES

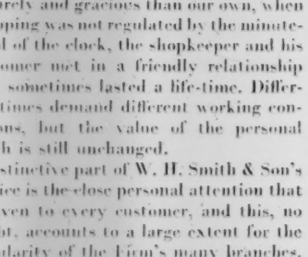
We have now had three of the hundred and fifty-six instalments of *A History in Sound of European Music*, which reveals itself as one of the very finest things the Third Programme has yet undertaken. I think I speak for many, in regretting the absence of repeats. I have heard the first three programmes, and I hope to hear the rest; but will *anybody* be willing to drape every Saturday night for several years round even these delectable half-hours? On other counts also, midweek repeats are imperative. The information in these programmes is such that a repeat is necessary to "fix" it in one's mind. No one will mind if the repeats start six or seven weeks late; indeed, one can imagine a sort of fugal presentation being extremely pleasant. There are quite special enjoyments to be got from the series, especially in these early days; for every now and then we realise that the piece of music being performed is, to put it baldly, the best yet: that is to say that every now and then the music seems to achieve a conspicuous advance in subtlety and expressiveness. Perhaps this is a freak sensation; but it is no longer possible to experience it when an art has attained maturity and produced a set of great and distinctive practitioners. This is another reason for wanting repeats; one wants to make notes on the pieces that accomplish these leaps forward—a distracting thing to do at first hearing. So far the executants have presented the material very beautifully, M. Meili's troubadour songs being especially memorable. I hope that the later programmes won't once more discover the vocal inadequacy so often revealed by the Third's resuscitations of ancient music. We have in England a strong tradition of genteel insipidity in the presentation of this; performances like the recent Monteverdi *Vespers* leave one embittered and frustrated. One longs for the glorious roar of the chorus under the dome, and is rewarded by gathering swallows twittering in the skies.

I cannot claim always to like Mr. M. R. Ridley's dashing way of cutting our great works about for the radio, but I found his version of *Measure for Measure* lucid throughout, which it easily might not have been. We missed certain things: some of them perhaps unavoidably, as, for example, the sense of the corrupt, filthy city in the background. But I could work out no very convincing reason for depriving us of the Duke's great address to Claudio. And there seems no point in cutting the Duke's first appearance in disguise in that scene which gives us our brief glimpse of Juliet; for not only has this scene its own significance: it allows us a breathing space while Angelo's guilty ardour feeds itself, out of our sight. Briskness was here quite out of place. The men in the cast were excellent, Mr. Arundell in particular building up a convincing Angelo remarkably early in the play; I am sorry that Mr. Kenton hurled his famous speech so violently and unsuggestively away, though I imagine that this was not done thoughtlessly. Miss Rachel Gurney was Isabella; the microphone was not kind to her, nor she to it.

Dull, verbose and platitudinous as a play, Mr. James Law Forsyth's *Bronze Horse* was given a production of unparalleled variety and magnificence by M. Michel St. Denis. It set a new standard for radio, and one hopes resident producers will not ignore it, for it suggested space and perspective in a way one had thought impossible on the air. The actors responded to detailed drilling, and seemed to have overcome that boredom which usually sets in among them if a play is rehearsed for more than a day and a half. Mr. Ralph Truman and Mr. Paul Scofield were outstanding; I hope we may hear more of Mr. Scofield than we have hitherto.

Second Opinion, discreetly and amiably presented by Mr. Frank Birch, has made an excellent and entertaining beginning. The proceedings opened with a postcard from Mr. Bernard Shaw about a discussion of *Paradise Lost* in which I had myself been privileged to take part. Modesty restrains me from divulging on whose side Mr. Shaw seemed to have been; what genuinely moved me was the thought that one's own humble mumblings had reached those ears at all; I have felt no comparable emotion since I gave up prayer.

HENRY REED



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THE REDFERN GALLERY

Rouault's "Guerre" and "Miserere"

The Redfern Gallery have assembled the 57 huge aquatints by Rouault, prints of all the plates that are known to have been made (the Gallery's catalogue tells us) for 100 projected illustrations for two books by André Suares. Rouault seems to have worked intermittently at these prints from 1916, when Vollard commissioned the scheme, until 1927. As a keystone, so to speak, in each wall of black and white at the Redfern, a single painting has been inserted: but these only show to what an extent the bulging whites and contracting blacks of the prints have usurped the functions of colour. We realise that Rouault's is essentially a black-and-white vision. Its forms are created by encircling all convex surfaces—the whites—with immensely thick, black lines, lines so thick as not to be "lines" at all, for the definition of the many receding or "vanishing" planes is concentrated into a single iron bar of blackness. With the apparent ease of a herculean blacksmith these bars of definition are made to twist and writhe until a form is born and a ghostly face looks out. But this birth is the result of the marriage of pure white and pure black: half-tones are, like colour in his paintings, an afterthought, an enriching detail which the structure can happily be made to carry. In his paintings one savoured his reds and greens for their redness or greenness, forgetting for a moment what niche they occupy in the structure they adorned: yet, like figures on a cathedral façade, which, though inviting a separate scrutiny, remain consistent supports of the architectural whole, the jewel quality of Rouault's *patches* of colour never detracts from the pre-defined unity.

Apart from his genius for resolving form into these islands of white defined by channels or pools of black Rouault is a painter of the severest limitations. If we have thoroughly absorbed the miraculous interplay of the white and black shapes and are looking for the next kind of formal relation, the interaction of a *whole* form such as a head or figure with other whole units, we are about to be disappointed. The relation in space of one figure to another, or to a house, or a landscape, is so simple as to be naive, almost crude. Rouault would seem, almost always, to have spent himself by the time he comes to the problem of relating his magnificently fractured, dissected yet reorganised persons either to their immediate setting or to one another. Similarly, he is happiest where only a head, or a head and shoulders, or a head and shoulders and trunk (but not the *whole* figure!) is there in the picture to worry him. Where he cannot avoid landscape he reduces it either to a backcloth—note the old trick of a single street vanishing into the distance with houses of accentuated perspective—or to a single vast plain; which is, of course, a single vast plane, too! And where he must draw a whole man, right out to his fingers and toes, he is much less inventive than where he has simply the hulk of a torso or bust or head to go at. Hands and feet become mere gestures in this direction or that: hands, particularly, are a cliché with Rouault—a row of parallel fingers straight from the Middle Ages, little better than Eric Gill's woodcuts. Think of hands, *and* feet, in any drawing of Picasso: they are portraits in themselves.

But it is when Rouault has to group three or more (whole) people that he is at his poorest in these aquatints, for then he is merely evoking puppets with matchstick arms and legs bending only at elbows and knees. I know that *texture* never fails: but texture can be merely decorative. And I recognise that the very elementary spatial relation of some of the figures is intentional, that it simplifies the arrangement until it is almost in terms of bas-relief; a sort of medallion imagery. This last quality is present in them all and it is a magnificent quality. But nothing can redeem such commonplace groups as 24 and 29; and even in 28 the familiar symbolic belfry and some dramatic spurts of flame and smoke do not atone for the foreground of . . . . . reclining meringues . . . .

That I point so eagerly to the slightest occasional failure is, of course, simply inverted praise. Rouault is one of the five great painters living. But he is a lonelier genius in every way than any of the others, who have created company for themselves simply by influencing the whole of Western art. Yet he is a good deal responsible for the modern feeling and respect for the material means of expression. One feels a reciprocal action went on between artist and ink: artist has idea, impulsively stabs the paper—great inky line *surprises* artist; so, off again, his second impulse has fed upon the *result* of the first—"idea" has taken a hint from a blob, or the quality of grained paper, or the mess that has, partly accidentally, coagulated on the canvas. It is one of the healthiest features of modern art, from Picasso or Rouault to Moore and Sutherland, this two-way traffic. But, of course, it must never be consciously exploited: the painter must ceaselessly focus upon something he cannot do; the sort of alliance with paint I have described must not be entered into *before* the engagement with the enemy—one's next picture. It must forever be natural, in that it will, if it has come the right way, seem to materialise each time unexpectedly in the thick of the battle. Then one has the blissful experience that suddenly everything is on one's side, paint, canvas, subject: thus the "ease" which successful painting suggests.

PATRICK HERON

THE THEATRE

Two Plays by James Bridie, at the Mercury

These two short plays were written by Mr. Bridie for a small travelling company; and the conditions under which they were to be performed have imposed a cut right back through the elaborations that "production" has gathered round the Play, to earlier dramatic simplicities. The total effect is of the charm of naivieté, delicate and appetising yet perhaps, in the end, not quite satisfying. The first piece, *The Dragon and the Dove*, is taken from a tale in Helen Waddell's *The Desert Fathers*. Abraham, an anchorite, has, in the neighbouring cell, brought up from childhood his brother's daughter. Seduced one night by a young friar she runs away and disappears; some years later she is reported to be serving in a brothel in Babylon. The good old man, to save her, doffs his habit and dons a colonel's disguise and goes down to the wicked city. There he confounds the keeper of the bawdy house and her reptilian accomplice, and restores his niece to repentance and her cell. The text is kept as simple as is the story; it relies for its effect finally on establishing in the earlier scenes the plain homespun human simple-heartedness of the old hermit, plaiting his mats, munching his lentils, and delivering his good rough sentiments. Only by contrast with the convincing decorum of this first picture can we laugh in the right way at his imitation soldier. Mr. Speaight brings this off perfectly.

The fireworks of wit and invention we have come to associate with Mr. Bridie are reserved for the little modern morality *A Change for the Worse*. Here we are presented with a small-town façade. A goldsmith's house on our left with St. Eloi's church next to it: a fisherman's cottage on the right and next to it the red mouth of Hell. The goldsmith is rich and ill and his wife underworked and unhappy: the fisherman robust but overworked and his wife gay but undernourished. Vice, the child of the devil, pops out of Hell's mouth with his father, and, finding the fisherman's wife complaining of her lot, switches the two pairs round. But Evil has miscalculated; both pairs are happy in their transformation. The goldsmith gets health and his wife gets work: the fisherman gets food and his wife fashion. For this piece Mr. Bridie has employed a loose-running verse, the sophistication of the rhyme effectively pointing the primitiveness of the device. This kind of thing requires a high stylisation in the performance, for which Mr. Martin Browne as St. Eloi sets the standard, but which all the company could not keep up with. Mr. Brian Carey, as Vice, jauntily fitting a red topper over green horns, gave a memorable comic act.

T. C. W.

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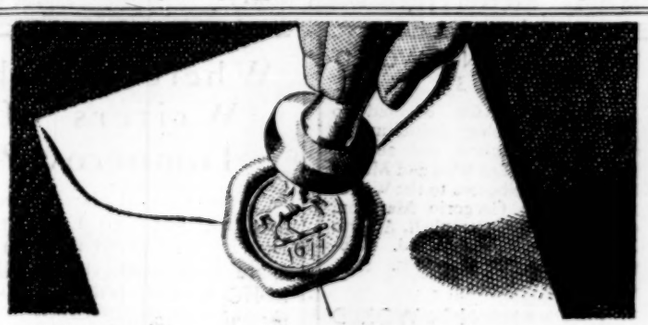

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THE RUHR CRISIS

SIR,—That, in the third winter, rations for millions in Germany should consist of little but grey bread is disgraceful. It is not made the less so by calling this state of affairs "a German responsibility." That is untrue. Things would no doubt be far better if Germans in general were acting selflessly, but, of course, they are not: they are acting much as Frenchmen have been acting in far less desperate circumstances, and—who knows?—as we might act if similarly placed.

The main responsibility is Allied. For instance: (1) Before the war "Bizonia" drew much of its food from land now under Russian and Polish administration. Is the loss of the German East to the German West a German or an Allied responsibility? To make matters worse, the population of "Bizonia" has been swollen by a hideous influx of expellees. Was that something Germans could control? Or, once again, were the Allies responsible? (2) German "responsibility" at the centre (Frankfurt) for food policy has been very largely fictitious. Practically everything of importance has had to be submitted to Military Government. Delays by the latter have sometimes been unconscionable. The new collection system of North-Rhine-Westphalia was completed by German agencies in June, and only released for publication by Military Government in October. The potato decree—when time was everything—was held up for a month. (3) Frankfurt has had no power whatever of enforcing its decisions in the *Laender*—the particularism of which we (whether British or Americans is irrelevant) deliberately fostered. And when, for instance, the Frankfurt instruction to cellar only one hundredweight of potatoes was defied by a *Land* administration, Military Government did nothing to call those responsible to account. (4) It was inevitable, at a time of desperate shortages, that the *Laender*, unless effectively controlled by the Germans at Frankfurt (who have been powerless to do so) or by Military Government (which has failed to do so) would play for their own hand. The constitutional set-up has made things worse. *Land* Ministers are responsible to *Land* Parliaments, which are there to look after *Land* interests. Obviously, then, a *Land* Agricultural Minister, faced with a demand contrary to these interests, either openly opposes or silently sabotages it. (5) Allied failure to reform the currency and to deal with the famine in farming requisites and consumer goods would have made efficient collection impossible anywhere in the world. How many farmers would deliver a hundredweight of wheat for 20 marks if they could get 2,000 marks for it without difficulty? Again, the farmer must have nails, horseshoes, working clothes, etc., none of which are obtainable with money: so he exchanges part of his produce for the means of production. Discreditable though all this is, who in his senses would have expected anything different?

The proposed reorganisation at Frankfurt, as tentatively sketched, seems unlikely to remedy these disasters. Still no effective German responsibility; still no power at the centre to enforce decisions, nor provision for such enforcement by Military Government. Nothing will do but the following: (1) There must be what can reasonably be called a Government at Frankfurt. (2) *Laender* food administrations must be responsible, not to *Laender* Parliaments, but to Frankfurt. (3) Either Frankfurt must have effective power to enforce its decrees in the *Laender*, or Military Government must state explicitly that it will invariably—and speedily—enforce them itself. (4) There must be exact demarcation between the powers of Military Government, Frankfurt and *Laender* respectively. (5) The development of industries for farming requisites and consumer goods must be planned as a military operation. (6) Whatever the world difficulties, official German rations must be raised to at least a just bearable level. What on earth have we been doing with our recent increase in fats, when millions of Germans have had no fats whatever for weeks and weeks? (7) Currency reform must at last be carried through—and it must be of a kind that will really break the black market, and not lead to its reappearance in a matter of weeks.

VICTOR GOLLANCZ

FRENCH SOCIALISTS

SIR,—I was astonished to read Mr. Zilliacus's letter in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. It is untrue to say that the French Socialist Party is losing its working-class support, its membership and its influence. In the last municipal elections, while the M.R.P. and the Communists both lost votes, the Socialists held their own and even gained ground in many working-class districts; moreover, since the November strike, many workers who, in the Trade Union field, are flocking into the "Force Ouvrière"—which, according to the French tradition, is entirely non-political—are coming back to the Socialist local branches.

It is untrue to describe the Act recently passed by the French Parliament as an "anti-strike law." On the contrary, one of its articles clearly stipulates the right to strike, which is already proclaimed by the French constitution. It is true that, in this Act, sabotage is clearly defined and punished. But has sabotage ever been a part of Socialist tactics?

It is untrue to say that some members of the Socialist Party, who have left it voluntarily without being expelled, were indicted for their attitude towards the Act or for their private opinions. They had been guilty of a serious breach of discipline in publishing a manifesto calculated to harm the Socialist Party.

It is untrue to say that the "Third Force" policy in both Home and International matters is only a "verbal platform" and that the present grouping is dominated by "semi-Gaullist forces." It is the Communists who, as the last votes in both Chambers of Parliament clearly show, are in constant alliance with the Gaullists against the present Government. As for the independence of France towards the U.S.A., I just ask Zilliacus to read the resolutions adopted by the French Socialist Party, especially the resolution of the National Council in June, 1947.

I am all the more surprised to read these fantastic statements under the signature of my old friend Zilliacus, because, when he was in Paris lately, he spent two hours and a half with Léon Blum and myself: the position of France and the French Socialists was then clearly explained to him by Léon Blum, and when we left, he himself told me how impressed he had been by what he had heard.

The truth of the matter is that the Communists, not the Socialists, are now losing ground. That Zilliacus cannot see it makes me fear that his vast knowledge and insight, for which I had the greatest respect, are now sadly distorted by the Cominform glasses he has been wearing for some time.

S. GRUMBACH,
Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Council of the Republic; International Delegate of the French Socialist Party.

THE B.M.A. PLEBISCITE

SIR,—I regret to say that, although I am a Socialist and believe in the National Medical Scheme, I shall vote against it when the British Medical Association send me my voting paper. The reason for this apparent inconsistency is that I am a specialist, and the Spens Committee will not be able to state what salary we shall be paid until after the plebiscite. Neither have we been told what will be our hours of work or holidays. I expect that there will be many who will regard me, and others like me, as money-grubbing and grasping. If they do, it will be because they do not appreciate that I have heavy commitments, insurances and so on, which I cannot disregard.

Surely it is a tactical mistake that the Labour Party has not arranged that we should know exactly how much we shall earn, what hours we shall work and what holidays we shall have rather, than ask us to

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buy a pig in a poke. In not doing so, it has given the B.M.A. a tremendous advantage. Moreover, it is not consistent with proper dealings with a profession which is composed, in the majority, of men who wish to do their best for the country. Can one imagine, for example, the miners or railwaymen being asked to vote for a proposition without being told how much they will earn and what hours they will work? I would suggest that the B.M.A. be asked that the plebiscite be postponed until *after* the Spens Committee has announced its finding, and the initiation of the National Medical Service delayed the same amount of time. M.D.

[We regret that our "Socialist" correspondent should have swallowed so completely the B.M.A. "party line." To bring the consultants in behind what is really a G.P. ballot, the Association is banking on the delay in the Spens Report, although there is nearly six months in which it can emerge and the Minister act upon it. Let consultants examine the hospital scheme, with all the concessions made to them, also the Government's generous interpretation of the Spens G.P. scales and ask whether it is likely to be niggardly in its scales for specialists. If it is a "pig in a poke," it will be a well-nourished one.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

PARLIAMENT AND FILM MONOPOLISTS

SIR,—The problem of stimulating British film production is, as Mr. Woodrow Wyatt rightly says, not merely one of getting more studio space, but of dealing with the methods of distribution and exhibition which have combined to keep British films off the screen. Closely related to this is the further problem of production finance in the case of all independent production and particularly of what are called "supporting" films. Unless the producers of such films can obtain some guarantee of distribution and also a fair share of the box-office takings, they are inevitably driven out of business and into the ranks of the big combines, or, in the case of the documentary and specialised film producers, forced to look for finance and even exhibition outside the film industry. Such a situation is manifestly absurd at a time when British cinemas are suffering from an acute shortage of films, and when increased production is a national necessity.

The new Films Bill will determine the future of the British film industry and the standard of cinema entertainment for the next ten years. As drafted, it is in many respects an advance on the existing Act. But to be effective, it must do something to adjust the present unequal financial balance of power within the industry.

At present the percentage of the box-office takings allocated by the exhibitor to the supporting films is totally inadequate. By the time the renter has also had his share, the amount left for the producer is negligible. In very few cases do receipts cover even a reasonable proportion of the costs of production. The Bill requires the renter to book each film separately. This will help to prevent the block-booking of programmes, which has in the past resulted in short films being thrown in as make-weights for a few shillings a time. But this provision by itself will not improve the present totally inadequate marketing conditions for supporting films. It is essential that the new Act should require the exhibitor to allocate a statutory minimum percentage of the net takings to the supporting films as well as requiring the renter to pass on a fairer division of these receipts to the producer. Without such provisions there can be no real improvement on the quality of programmes.

A minimum labour cost test of 10s per foot to apply to all films, short as well as long, is a new feature in the Bill. But while it will help to eliminate the shoddier short films, the test is not high enough to prevent a revival of the long "quota quickie" films which discredited British production pre-war. A further labour cost test of £1 a foot for long films is certainly necessary.

The provision whereby all cinemas earning less than £100 a week would be completely exempted from any quota obligations is an alarming one. Although no official figure is available, the film trade press has estimated that at least one third of all cinemas would fall into this category. The reasons for this exemption may be justifiable in the case of first-feature films while product is in short supply, but there is no reason why it should be extended to cover all categories of British films.

SINCLAIR ROAD

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KASHMIR

SIR,—I greatly appreciate your editorial comments on Pakistan-India dispute over Kashmir, and the valuable suggestions made by you that the Security Council should avoid the slow-moving procedure that has been customary in other matters. At the same time I feel, and so do all my countrymen, that a certain amount of discussion, not to apportion the blame for events in Kashmir but to apprise Uno of the complete details of the unhappy dispute, will be inevitable.

But I fail to understand the logic, why it would be useless for the British delegation to "come down in favour of either Dominion" if they justly find the other guilty of breach of the inter-Dominion agreements.

Britain has maintained, rather raised still higher, her traditions of democracy and social justice by recognising the right of self-determination of the Indian peoples. But why should such a laudable act on the part of the Britishers deprive them of exercising their independent judgment in matters vitally important for the world peace?

I agree with you that the task of the British delegation at Uno is a peculiarly delicate one. But it is precisely for the same reason that any effort on their part to withhold their just view, lest they may incur the displeasure of either of the Dominions, may be considered by the democratic nations of the earth an admirable stroke of diplomacy, but not an act of justice. Furthermore, the British delegation at the Security Council is there not as a representative of a parent country as against subordinate States but as an independent observer representing a democratic nation, and I think that to act otherwise will do more harm than good to the greater cause of global peace.

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AUSTRALIAN FOOD PRICES

SIR,—The British Government has just agreed to buy Australian wheat at 17s per bushel. There has been little comment in the press, but wheat farmers are hanging their heads in shame, feeling that their Government has been fleecing the Old Country. It is only four months ago since the Australian Government sold wheat to the New Zealand Government at 5s 9d per bushel. Why does the British Government squander money at 17s a bushel embarrassing its friends in this part of the world? Farmers would have been well content with 10s a bushel, the price paid to the Canadians.

I have just received my copy of the Price List for Export Lambs for the current season, and am quite disgusted with it. These lambs are intended for export to Britain, and the prices are those which have been negotiated with the Ministry for Food. Here are some examples, quoted in Australian currency: 1st quality, Down type, 20-28lb dressed carcase weight, 10.41d per lb; 1st quality, Down type, 43-50lb dressed carcase weight, 9.07d per lb; 1st quality, other type, 51-56lb dressed carcase weight, 7.28d.

Altogether there are fourteen different categories. My major concern is that this list is still modelled on the pre-war trade. In other words, Mr. Strachey is chiefly interested in the small, quality joint for the week-end roast, and is prepared to pay a very large premium per pound for it. There is a difference of 20 per cent in the price per pound of a lamb, say two and a half months old, weighing 25lb, and the same lamb, still sucking a ewe, two and a half months

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Company Meeting

MARTINS BANK

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR THE NATION

CHAIRMAN'S SURVEY

THE 117th Annual General Meeting of Martins Bank Limited will be held on January 30th in Liverpool. The Chairman, Mr. A. Harold Bibby, D.S.O., D.L., in his statement to the shareholders, refers to a successful year despite increased taxation and heavier working expenses.

The main theme of Mr. Bibby's lucid statement deals with the measures necessary to overcome Britain's economic dilemma of deploying its diminished resources in such a way as to meet the demands of defence, capital creation and consumption.

Failing increased productivity on the part of our twenty million working population, the competing claims on the national effort of these three fields of demand cannot, at present, be met and expansion in one field can only be at the expense of contraction in other fields.

The Chairman draws attention to the fact that the measure of the nation's position was indicated when, in his Autumn budget, the Chancellor announced the curtailment of food purchases by no less than £210 millions and capital expenditure by £280 millions.

This further lowering of earlier austerity standards supports Mr. Bibby's contention "that the country should be made to understand the futility of any section of the community seeking to improve its position permanently at the expense of the rest, without a proportionate increase in production." To pay for food and raw materials and thus avoid unemployment we must increase our exports and on this point Mr. Bibby's comment is "To export, we must not only produce the goods that our customers wish to buy, but produce them at a price that they are able and willing to pay. Every shilling that raises the selling price of our manufactures, be it owing to out-of-date machinery, excessive overhead charges, heavy national or local taxation, or failure to give increased production directly related to increased wage costs, must curtail our ability to expand our exports."

Mr. Bibby also develops the argument that it is essential that the Government's financial policy should at all points aid and not hinder the prescribed programme. He states: "The strain on national economies due to inflationary pressure is in evidence throughout the world. . . . This general disequilibrium is admittedly due to excessive demand arising from a relative superfluity of money and other restrictive measures will be of no avail if the financial remedy is not applied. . . . Sound finance and sound money are the requisites for a healthy and freer economy at home and also for a restoration of the international trade on which the well-being and prosperity of these islands depend."

The Chairman concludes with a reference to the support given to him by the members of the general and district Boards; general management and the staff. Of the last he says: "I am very conscious of how much the success of our efforts is due to the diligence and loyalty of thousands of our staff, many of whom work untiringly in remote places."

WHY YOU GET
Colds and 'Flu

A frequent cause of colds is sudden lowering of the body temperature, which weakens the natural resistance of the body to microbes in the atmosphere. This often happens through exposure to a sudden blast of cold damp air, from getting wet through in the rain, or from sitting in a draught.

COUGHS AND SNEEZES

The cold weather always brings on a spate of coughing and sneezing, and there is no more effective method of spreading germs than by coughing or sneezing them into the atmosphere.

HOT, STUFFY ROOMS

In winter, we tend to congregate in stuffy, insufficiently-ventilated rooms, producing an atmosphere in which germs thrive. After inhaling the germs, we often go out, insufficiently protected, into the cold air; our resistance is weakened and the germs can get to work.

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later, weighing 50lb. Why are farmers encouraged to kill off young immature lambs when the British housewife is rationed as she is?

Further, is an average price of 8d per lb going to induce farmers here to send lambs to Britain? The figures of export carcases from this small island have gone down from over 100,000 pre-war to less than 2,000 last year. To reach even this low figure the Australian Meat Board has to make a sentimental appeal to farmers. To quote from its circular, "The Old Country, as it is commonly called, is in urgent need of all the meat that we can send, and I am sure you will agree that there is a definite obligation on the Dominions to see that our kinsman overseas are properly fed. The U.K. Government has urgently appealed to us to increase our shipments of frozen meat . . . I therefore appeal to you to help, even if you can only send a few. Every carcase will help . . ."

I sent my lambs last year, but the low financial returns convinced me that I could not afford to do the same again unless there were a revision in the prices, and especially a change in the senseless prejudice against a decent-sized lamb. My new list showed the prices this year have been raised a fraction of a penny per pound on the small carcases and *lowered* on some of the larger. The result, in my case, is that I have just sold my lambs on the local market for 55s each, and I estimate them to weigh 55lb.

As well as a general overhaul of the machinery of negotiation for bulk purchase of foodstuffs, might I also suggest that the British Government have a farmer, preferably one who has a knowledge of British as well as Australian farming conditions, to rub shoulders with the Queensland beefmen, the N.S.W. woolgrowers, the Victorian wheatgrowers, and the dairymen from every State, finding out what they are thinking, especially regarding prices, and passing on the information to the Ministry of Food. Armed with such information Mr. Strachey would be in a position to negotiate intelligently with the statesmen of Canberra for the purchase of Australian produce.

W. H. ALTON

Rocky Cape, Tasmania.

WHITEHEAD

SIR,—Dr. Joad's short account of Whitehead gives your readers little encouragement to turn to his works. In doing so, they might at least begin to decide for themselves whether or not he was a great philosopher. For two very pleasant years I was a pupil of Whitehead's at Harvard; I never became his disciple, but learned a very great deal from him. It seems clear to me that he made quite new and highly important contributions to the fundamental and central enquiries of traditional British philosophy—I mean to the problems of perception, causation, the nature of abstract ideas, and the relations of mind and body. Of course, I found his lectures, like his books, very difficult; but I have always found serious philosophy a difficult matter.

Joad devotes most of his space to the familiar charge that Whitehead was obscure. Of course, Whitehead himself knew that he was obscure; and therefore he tried again and again, in book after book, and in his lectures, to excite and coax people to form for themselves the new notions which his analysis of experience required. It is misleading to suggest that he did not take the trouble to make himself clear, or that he was obscure because he lacked skill or experience as a writer. Surely his essays on education and politics and on his own early environment show that he could write with great simplicity and delicacy where the nature of his subject permitted. Neither the obscurity nor (as Joad unkindly hints) the novelty, of his metaphysics, arises from the new terms which (after much consideration) he introduced into his discussions. The traditional terminology of metaphysics is infected with vagueness and ambiguity, and re-infected in each generation. To make a new start, to coin and define one's own basic terms, is not an eccentric or unprecedented step, as Joad well knows. But, of course, no amount of preliminary definition ensures strict precision in usage; and I think Whitehead's attitude was that it is best to be frankly sceptical all the time about the exactness of one's terms. He regarded as entirely unfounded the claim that philosophy has, ready to hand, a set of technical terms which anyone could use to express his metaphysics. And nearly all the great philosophers of the past and present share that view.

Not so Dr. Joad; and your readers should know that it is something of a hobby-horse with him that the obscurity of philosophers is "nothing but bad craftsmanship" (he has also charged Kant with laziness and incompetence as a writer). I do not see how anyone could hold this opinion while actively engaged in doing Philosophy.

I have only one other comment to make. Whitehead was undoubtedly a great *man*, and supremely generous and kindly to everybody. The death of such a man might have incited the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION to something a little bit warmer than Dr. Joad's interim summing-up. However, I remember with pleasure Critic's very genuine approval when Whitehead received the Order of Merit some two years ago.

KARL BRITTON

University College of Swansea.

NEUTRALITY IN PALESTINE

SIR,—Recently, in retaliation against the Arab blockade of 3,000 Jews in the Old City of Jerusalem and other outrages, a squad of Irgun terrorists, having gatecrashed by a ruse a road block manned by Arab terrorists, threw a bomb. In its report of the affair, the *Daily Express* referred to the Jews as thugs and to the Arabs as Home Guards, and this without even the saving grace of inverted commas. On the face of it, this seems a crass instance of journalistic bias. Actually, however, the *Express* was merely reflecting the official attitude. For the blockade has been recognised by the authorities; British soldiers, so far from arresting the Arab terrorists and demolishing the road block, meekly show their papers to them and get checked in (though on special occasions they do take supplies in). The idea of combing the Arab quarter for arms is, of course, unthinkable to the British official mind.

I would add that the cossetting of Arab terrorists goes much further back than the present Bevin vendetta against the National Home. It has been a classic feature of practically every administration except the regime of Lord Plumer.

HORACE B. SAMUEL

ARBEITERWOHLFAHRT

SIR,—Mr. Ashley Bramall in his letter published by you on December 27, 1947, states that "Relief work in Germany is largely conducted on confessional or other sectional lines, and it is an unfortunate fact that with all the help that has been given by people in this country to relieve distress in Germany, all too little has gone to thousands in the Labour Movement who have been consistent opponents of the Nazis." Whatever may be the position as regards the relief work carried out by the recognised German Welfare Societies, it is certainly not true as relating to the supplies of food, clothing, medicines, etc., sent out from this country by member societies of the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad, which include:—

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COLLINS

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE goodness and greatness of John Ruskin were articles of faith in Nonconformist families at the beginning of this century; and even those who had never read him, who, for example, knew nothing of art and believed passionately in competition, took him to be some higher, saintly and aberrant part of themselves. In the last twenty mad years of his solitude at Brantwood, the difficult prophet had become a myth. The delight of reading him—I remember—was trance-like; but it was a trance of awe, even of fear, as well as of pleasure, for the shimmering prose was marked by a severe note of incantation and, in argument, had both the ruthlessness and slyness one has since come to beware of in the more mellifluous prophets with a mystical strain. What a savage shock it was when, with that music still in one's head, and when one was still held by that subtle and arrogant eye which imputed sin to all of us—what a shock it was when we picked up the pocket edition of Collingwood's biography and read the incredible lines:

> His wife returned to her parents and instituted a suit against him to which he made no answer. The marriage was annulled in July. A year later she married Millais.

This—after reading *Sesame and Lilies*—could not be possible! And presently one came across words which (it now appears) must have come from another edition of Collingwood: they reinstated the myth:

> He with his consciousness of having fulfilled all the obligations he had undertaken, and with an old-fashioned delicacy and chivalry which revolted alike from explanation and recrimination set up no defence, brought no counter charges, and prepared to let gossip do its worst.

There was the praise, indeed the defence of Millais's *Vale of Rest*—how tired the energetic Victorians seem to have got!—to confirm the sublimity of his conduct. And when we found that Millais's *Life*, by his son, contained no reference to the story, beyond mentioning that Lady Millais had been married before, we were hypnotised by Victorian discretion. It was as if the episode had never happened.

Now, fifty years after the deaths of the three figures in this drama, the price of discretion is revealed. Gossip did do its worst—not to Ruskin but to Effie Gray, Ruskin's "Fair Maid of Perth," who had no biographer to put her case. Her own desire for forgetfulness or decorum may be to blame. Six hundred and thirty-three letters written by Ruskin and by herself were discovered after their deaths and have waited a long time for publication. Some were found in the archives of Bowerswell, the home of her family; others, more strangely, were discovered under the floorboards in Ruskin's house at Brantwood; and there is a document, yielded by a solicitor's widow, which has been seen but is under seal in the Bodleian, and in which Ruskin, far from keeping silence, makes a bitter reply to the suit of nullity. From these letters Admiral Sir Wm. James has made a selection* with the proper intention of clearing his grandmother's name. They indicate and clearly refute the calumnies which were circulated about her by the older Ruskins and their son; and we are now able to see much more of a bitter and tragic story.

The "official" story of Ruskin's marriage arose, as Admiral James suggests, chiefly because of the Victorian dread of the subject of sexual abnormality; the material of the story came mainly from Ruskin's ambitious, violent, fretful and possessive parents, who were originally hostile to the marriage, interfered in it continually with the fanaticism of the dispossessed, and saw in its failure the Heaven-sent chance of getting back their adored son. What they suggested, and what Ruskin himself said after the suit, was that the marriage with the nineteen-year-old Effie Gray was arranged; it had been sought by the Grays, who were in financial difficulties, and there was no love on either side. As to the impotence of Ruskin, the Ruskins were silent; their line was that Ruskin refused to consummate the marriage, first of all because Effie was a child—the familiar Victorian *motif* of the child-wife appears, as it does, in the novels of Dickens, with the disturbing association of erotic idealism and cruelty—and later because she was suffering from incipient insanity. This particular charge appears in an extraordinary letter written by Ruskin to Mr. Gray, in which he tells his father-in-law about Effie's ill-health. The duplicity is blatant. After talking about her nerves and a disease of the brain: "I have my own opinions," he says in a sentence which reveals the subtle gambling hand of the neurotic "as to its principle cause—but it does not bear on the matter in hand," and then darts back into really frightening farce: "She showed for the first time petulance towards my mother, I reproved her when we were alone. The matter in question was indeed one of very grave importance—being a wish on my mother's part that I should take a blue pill when I went to bed."

There were other charges of extravagance, ignorance and lightness of behaviour, but, as in the charge of insanity, the fact is that Ruskin and his parents, in the habit of neurotics, accused Effie of the things which they alone were guilty of.

If we return to Ruskin's own statement that he did not love Effie Gray, we are faced now by the evidence of his passionate love letters, and by the fact that it was he who pressed for the engagement against the hostility of his monstrous mother.

Here Ruskin may have been the victim of his own prose; writers have been known to create feeling artificially by the act of writing and to cast their own spell upon themselves, and it may be that passion can be most articulate in those who cannot give it effect. The letters are long within their vivacity a note of loneliness and fear is audible. And that strange associative tendency of his imagination—which for colder critics was to mar his prose—carries him into metaphors which the psycho-analyst would seize at once:

> Yes—only *one* month between us now. I begin to feel quite frightened, like Sinbad the Sailor when his ship was drawing nearer and nearer to the lodestone mountain—I hope you will not pull any bolts out—Effie—Love does such things sometimes.

Or

> I do not know anything dreadful enough to liken you to . . . You are like the bright—soft—swelling—lovely fields of a high glacier covered with fresh morning snow—which is heavenly to the eye—and soft and winning to the foot—but underneath, there are winding clefts and dark places in its cold—cold ice—when men fall and rise not again.

We look back to such passages when later on we read the extraordinary account of her marriage night which Effie wrote six years later to her father when at last she appealed for help:

> I had never been told the duties of married persons to each other in the closest union on earth. For days John talked about his relation to me but avowed no intention of making me his Wife. He alleged various reasons, hatred to children, religious motives, a desire to preserve my beauty and finally, this last year, told me his true reason (and this to me is as villainous as all the rest), that he imagined women were quite different to what he saw I was.

Unhappiness has its own spell, its own bonds and satisfactions. There is no reason to disbelieve Effie when she writes that she could have gone on with this unnatural marriage, but for the interference of the older Ruskins. But this interference was possible solely because of the passivity of the son. Taught to obey implicitly, always at their command, unable to be happy unless he was submitting to their will, Ruskin had developed the ambivalence, the duplicity, the will-lessness of the enslaved and possessed. He hated and loved his parents at once; they had made him, he knew, weak and effeminate; yet without them he was nothing. His father visited the couple early in their honeymoon! (He had a peculiarly unpleasant interest in their intimate life and the couple shared a rancorous amusement in deceiving the old busybody.) The mother perpetually enquired, advised and interfered. She left to her husband the grand frontal attacks and insinuated herself in the matter of his health. Tea-papers for the chest; first thing in the morning, when the couple are living with their in-laws, it is "Don't sit near the towels, they are damp." One hears her greedy voice in old Ruskin's astonishing lines, "For Heaven's sake, my dearest John, never whilst I live dream of going into a vessel with steam in it. Ever since the Amazon burning I have never had it out of my head. Pray write us directly a long account of your health, your pulse, meals, sleep and perspiration, etc." To the older Ruskin, his wife, who had been the ambitious daughter of a Croydon innkeeper, and who had in masterful fashion rescued his own family's wine business from insolvency by making him save half his wages for ten years before she married him—to the older Ruskin this woman had become something more than human. After declaiming upon the duties of a wife to her mother-in-law, the father writes:

> With these convictions as to the part his mother had in forming his character you may suppose that your advice to us not at all to interfere any longer with the young couple was hardly agreeable or palatable—that to propitiate your daughter as yet a child who cannot yet be expected to comprehend the higher points of her husband's character, nor of his writings, if she has ever read them, the Voice of that parent was to be silenced, whose nurture and admonition had made him all that he ever will be . . .

A Pecksniff, a Podsnap, a Sapsea might be speaking. And yet—the pathos. The appalling couple had produced a genius; once they suspected it, they ensured it by discipline, forcing, thwarting, with all the passion of people whose only child had come latish in life. With the madness of their own ambition they knew—it is their tragic justification—that a normal life would be impossible for him. They could only have wished him to be married so that they might enjoy it themselves. It was one more pleasure in the creation of a genius.

The task of living with one who exhausted himself in his work, whose essential inner aim (as it commonly is with many artists) was to create a solitude in which the soul could crystallise and which could be peopled by the imagination, might have been possible to a young woman of Effie Gray's sense, uncommon intelligence and liveliness, if there had been loyalty in return; but Ruskin's expense of spirit left him empty, evasive and Jesuitical in the ordinary transactions of the heart. He was clever enough to cheat; and when he was caught at it he was cynical, hard and even violent. He was an unscrupulous masochist, and there are hints that he was physically cruel. He certainly threatened her physically. Millais said there was something stealthy in his nature: the portraits certainly suggest it.

One can see Effie hardening under the strain. Does she tell the truth about the decision to apply for the annulment? She was learning to fight. We can hardly suppose that the proud woman of the picture did not often discuss a plan of campaign when she sat day after day to Millais while he painted the *Order of Release*.

The figure that remains in our minds when this book is put down is not Effie's, who at last became happy, or of the generous Millais, who became successful; but of Ruskin. Five years after his humiliation he was still not free of his parents; he was never to be free. But it is not fanciful to see in his turning to sociology his revolt against his early Protestantism, his attack upon the Victorian values, a vain dawning of the truth about his personal situation. That the attack was ineffectual was due to the fact that he was an extremist; that is to say, he was not free. The apron strings still held him. He knew this with the ambivalent clear-sightedness of the mad; and in those awful hallucinations at the end of his life when, we are told, he fought with a demon night after night at Brantwood, he was struggling with the demon of the century.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *The Order of Release*. EDITED BY SIR WILLIAM JAMES. *John Murray*. 18*s*.

KNAVE OR JOKER?

Thomas J. Wise in the Original Cloth. By WILFRED PARTINGTON. *Robert Hale.* 21s.

The jacket of this book excited my sad forebodings, so vulgar is its design; and indeed the author turns out to write in a vexingly undistinguished style. Nor can I find his comments upon character very penetrating. One must, however, be grateful to him for producing a good deal of new information about a savoury subject.

The comic spirit rejoices in an imposture, in proportion to its gratuitousness, to the acumen of its victims, and to the supposed respectability of its perpetrator. The exploits of T. J. Wise would therefore rank very high, if it could be shown that profit was not his principal aim. He was a rich businessman who had formed one of the finest private libraries in England, which it was understood he would bequeath to the nation. He was eminent also as a bibliographer. A close friend of Sir Edmund Gosse, he had been made an honorary Fellow by Worcester College, and Master of Arts by the University of Oxford. Then, thirteen years ago, when he was seventy-four, a book appeared called *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*, by John Carter and Graham Pollard. This was admirably written, fascinating in the logic and ingenuity of its detective methods. It proved that some fifty valued rarities on the book-market were forgeries. The authors did not explicity assert that Wise was the forger: he might have some explanation—though he had failed to produce one when approached by the authors. If he had been innocent the book would certainly have been actionable; and no action was taken. After a feeble attempt to shift the blame upon Buxton Forman, who was dead, Wise announced that his doctor forbade him to carry on any public correspondence. Three years later he died, leaving £138,000. The library was not left to the nation, but the British Museum acquired it from the family for much less than its value. Eighteen months ago a document written by Wise was published in the United States, in which he admitted forging a pamphlet, and with the cognisance of Buxton Forman. Though opinion about his accomplices remains divided, nobody, I presume, any longer doubts Wise's guilt. It remains to determine his motives.

We learn from Mr. Partington that Wise was born in 1859, the son of a Baptist tobacconist. He entered, probably as an office-boy, a firm dealing in essential oils, a commodity from which he eventually made his fortune. Though little educated, he was from the first interested in books, which he began to buy—and sell—while still a lad. In 1886 as a keen member of the Browning Society and the Shelley Society he produced for them facsimile reprints of early editions. This doubtless put into his head splendid possibilities; and he had become known to a most respectable firm of printers who were innocently ready to put false dates on their work, as they had quite properly done on the facsimiles. Within a few years Wise was faking first editions with delightful success. Only very exceptionally did he imitate an existing book—such forgeries are too easily detected. Instead, he printed works such as the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* as pamphlets, with a date earlier than that of the first edition. It was a most astute scheme, and the art with which he marketed the results commands admiration. To help in establishing the authenticity of his products, he would present anonymously copies to the British Museum, and infiltrate a few at low prices into the market. Sometimes he managed even to deceive authors, such as Browning, into accepting his forgeries of their works as genuine. I think that Mr. Partington attaches undue importance to an entry in an anonymous diary referring, as early as 1888, to Wise's "reprinting or pirating." This may well refer to the acknowledged facsimiles. But one of his forgeries was exposed by *The Athenæum* in 1898, and several others a few years later in the Cook and Wedderburn edition of Ruskin. Though Wise must have been scared, nobody sought to bring home to him the responsibility; and it is interesting that even in his later years, when he was rich, he continued to sell surreptitiously copies of the fraudulent pamphlets. The Fellow of Worcester retained a tradesman's appetite for profits, however small.

Miss Fannie Ratchford, an American expert who has pursued the researches begun by Mr. Carter and Mr. Pollard, tries to show that not only Buxton Forman but Edmund Gosse was an accomplice in Wise's frauds. I think, unlike Mr. Partington, that the case against Buxton Forman is very strong. On the other hand, I agree with him that all the evidence available tells in Gosse's favour. Moreover, Gosse's character makes his guilt wildly improbable. Even if he was not—as I believe he was—too honest for such practices, he was certainly too prudent. He valued very fully the high position to which his great gifts were raising him; and the notion that he could have risked this for a few thousand pounds strikes me as preposterous. But, someone may say, does not that apply equally to Wise? No; for when he was issuing his fakes, he had little money or position.

In 1940 Mr. Bernard Shaw annotated a copy of the American edition of Mr. Partington's book, and he has generously allowed him to print these notes in the present edition. He had known Wise; and offers the following explanation of the misdeeds that Mr. Partington attributes to a simple desire for money:

> His sense of humour had a good deal to do with his choice of this particular form of practical joke, which did not promise to be as lucrative as it proved. He forged nothing; all his literary material was quite genuine. He did not forge first editions: he invented imaginary ones. His fictions hurt nobody, and gave keen pleasure to collectors. Why should we be angry with him for making people harmlessly happy? Foolish people, no doubt, preferring first editions full of mistakes to final corrected editions. But quite harmless, like T.J. himself.

This airy way of evading facts seems to me not uncharacteristic of Mr. Shaw. In the Nineties, when Wise was so nefariously active, he was earning about £500 a year, and gaining from his frauds about twice this income. His industry therefore can certainly he called practical, though hardly a joke. For my part, while deeply respecting some of my friends who collect rare books, I fail to see that their addiction is superior to that of the philatelist. First editions are often not only inaccurate but ugly and inconvenient; nor can rarity in itself strike me as interesting. But this does not make me acquit Wise, as Mr. Shaw does. It is poor logic to conclude that obtaining money on false pretences is innocent, provided that the victim remains unaware of the fraud.

Wise's deceitfulness did, of course, bring him more than money: he got from it the prestige of owning objects that were greatly envied for their supposed rarity, and was able to endear himself to such distinguished figures as Gosse by offering them what seemed expensive presents. He may, moreover, have derived some perverse pleasure from deceiving the elect. But I am convinced that he felt his action to be profoundly wrong. He was tireless, vehement, and, I suspect, sincere in denouncing the forgeries of others. It seems unimaginative of Mr. Shaw to dismiss his swindles as harmless hoaxes; he fails to grasp how differently from himself a devout bibliophile such as Wise would be bound to regard them.

Mr. Partington neglects some interesting facts

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about Wise given by Mr. Carter two years ago in *The Atlantic Monthly*. He has, however, much that is new to tell us, particularly about the squalid, money-grubbing, sometimes even dishonest, methods used by Wise in dealing with Watts-Dunton over the Swinburne estate. Gosse seems to have been usually indulgent to him about this, such was his hatred of Watts-Dunton. But he became painfully agitated when Wise proposed to catalogue as Swinburne's some scabrous writings about flagellation: "To print these titles and first lines is to give away the whole secret which I have done my best to hide." (Gosse was always intent upon suppressing "unpleasant" facts about the eminent, and went so far as to destroy for this reason a Symonds manuscript that was not his property.) The chief value of Mr. Partington's book lies, I consider, in the comedy of the relationship between Gosse, so scholarly, so squeamish, and Wise, so ill-educated and so coarse. Apart from this, the book leaves us hoping that Mr. Carter and Mr. Pollard, whose *Enquiry* was written with exemplary taste and sense, will now give us a full study of the imposter they unmasked.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

WALHALLA REVISITED

The Life of Richard Wagner: Vol. IV (1866-1883). By ERNEST NEWMAN. *Cassell.* 30*s.*

Schubert: A Documentary Biography. By O. E. DEUTSCH. Translated by Eric Blom. *Dent.* 63*s.*

Schubert: A Symposium. Edited by GERALD ABRAHAM. *Lindsay Drummond.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

It has been Mr. Newman's playful custom to prefix the successive volumes of his great Life of Wagner with an allusive musical quotation from the Master's works, its point depending on the concealed words to which the notes belong. The present volume, which completes the grand design, contains two such quotations, which leave me (I am ashamed to confess) baffled and eager for elucidation. Was it simply modesty which deterred our author from the obvious choice—the musical phrase to which Wotan, proudly contemplating Walhalla at the beginning of the second scene of *Das Rheingold*, declaims the words: "Vollendet das ewige Werk!" ("Finished, the everlasting work!")? Not so much modesty, I dare say, as a prudent recollection of the fate which befell Walhalla at the end of the tetralogy. Well, it will be a long time before anyone need expect to see the result of Mr. Newman's labours go up in smoke and flame. His biographical tetralogy has taken some thirteen years of work—half as long as the *Ring* itself: it is planned to endure. Before embarking on it, he had already published four books about Wagner and his music, and he has been known to express regret at having devoted so much of his time and energy to a single field of study. Doubtless we have lost much; but we ought to be thankful that so difficult and important a task has been supremely well accomplished. Few men would have the patience to wade through the appalling mass of material (Wagner's is one of the most heavily documented lives in history, and Mr. Newman is constantly asking, in a footnote, for still more!) Fewer still possess the organising and clarifying ability, the common sense and quick grasp of motive, above all the vigorous style and unfailing liveliness of mind which make the book (as a whole) so readable. Though unwillingly, I add that parenthesis because there are undeniably sections which make heavy going for conscientious non-skippers. It has been said that when Wagner took up music the world lost a consummate actor; and when Mr. Newman decided to be a musical critic, the English Bar lost a formidable K.C. There is a forensic strain in his massive intellect which cannot bear to leave anything whatsoever in doubt; in his passion for clearing away the accumulation of misunderstanding and misrepresentation which surrounds Wagner's career, he delights to ferret out the smallest details which might throw the dimmest light on the point under discussion. These are splendid attributes in a biographer, and I do not suggest for a moment that Mr. Newman lacks a sense of proportion; still, there are occasions, especially where debts and dates are concerned, when the reader is only too ready to concede a point which the author insists on relentlessly continuing to prove for another ten pages.

Looking back over the four volumes, we are struck most of all by the justness of the biographer's attitude to his difficult sitter: none of Wagner's exasperating human pettiness is extenuated, yet we are never allowed to lose sight of his absolutely uncompromising idealism as an artist. We are left with a marvellously complete portrait of a most complex character; and it would be difficult to overestimate the interest, very often the amusement too, which we derive from the mass of detail which has gone to its creation. As a single instance, take those intensely German *tableaux vivants* with which Cosima and the children used to celebrate Wagner's birthday year after year, usually by some scene connected with one of his operas. Thus:

> The prelude was staged in the hall: Klingsor (Daniela) was sitting by his necromancer's apparatus, furious that he could not accomplish anything with it, until the Flower Maidens (Blandine, Isolde and Eva) put into his head the happy idea to produce something pretty for Wagner; whereupon the curtains opened and revealed Parsifal (Siegfried Wagner), who leaped out from a mass of roses to present his father with a watch, the gift of Cosima.

A terrible occasion when one of these domestic festivities was unwittingly interrupted by a comparative stranger is given to us in Wagner's own words, as reported by Albert Gutmann:

> "The other day that dreadful man, Sch . . . came here. I happened to open the door myself. I started back in terror . . . The tasteless fellow had come in bright yellow shoes. Of course, my wife had to ask him to stay to lunch, on his stepfather's account. There he showed himself in a still more offensive light. It was my birthday. My good Siegfried was making a speech about me that was really moving. But Sch . . . never stopped eating. He said to my wife, 'I like this asparagus; give me some more of it.' What a glutton! I can't stand gluttons!"

At this point we rub our eyes: are we reading about Richard Wagner—or about Charles Pooter and that dreadful man Gowing? Yet so firm is Mr. Newman's grasp that we feel little incongruity in passing from these absurdities to the consideration of *Tristan* or *Die Meistersinger*. A definitive work, and a major biography of our time.

Another immense undertaking recently brought to a conclusion is the "documentary biography" of Schubert by Professor Deutsch. It was in 1914, an unhappy moment, that the eminent Viennese scholar began the publication of every scrap of material which had any bearing on Schubert's life and surroundings—letters, diaries, pictures, contemporary criticism, obituaries, eulogies, even the composer's school reports (orthography good, arithmetic moderate, religion bad). The present edition, although in English, is regarded by the author as "the finally valid one"; it is enriched by an immense amount of elucidatory matter and many fascinating illustrations. It will not only satisfy the learned, but delight those many people who have fallen deeply in love with the musical personality of Schubert. Translation, indexing and general

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Suggesting this autobiography to Mr. Reynolds, the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer wrote, 'Now we are seeking our life-blood from our industrial products and our exports, he may find himself on ground better known to him and as fascinating and even fresher to the reader.' And in the preface to his exciting life story, he himself adds, 'If the *Times* is right, the appearance of an authentic book of this kind just now should be opportune, because many young men and women will be facing problems similar to those of my own early life and business experiences.'

Clifton Reynolds writes with all the liveliness and good humour which readers have come to expect from the author of the famous *Glory Hill Farm* books.

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THE BODLEY HEAD

arrangement are exemplary; my only small grumble is that the author's preface leads the reader to expect the inclusion of a thematic catalogue for which he will search in vain.

Professor Deutsch attributes his choice of the documentary method to the fact that he "lacks the gift of analysis and . . . dislikes the aesthetic approach to matters of art"—which is almost as though one were to confess a distaste for the historical approach to matters of history. Fortunately, Professor Abraham has seduced Professor Deutsch far enough away from this rigid attitude to write an admirable first chapter, not wholly free from critical or even aesthetic comment, to his symposium on Schubert. This is the second volume of a new and very useful series; an improvement, I think, on the first (on Tchaikovsky), and also an improvement on the rather unsympathetic treatment of Schubert in the Dent "Master Musicians" series. The great drawback of the Lindsay Drummond series is the lumping together of all the musical illustrations at the end of the book, which presents an almost intolerable inconvenience to the reader.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

WHOSE HARDSHIPS ?

Are These Hardships Necessary ? By R. F. HARROD. *Rupert Hart Davies.* 5*s.*

The British crisis, Mr. Harrod proclaims in this book, is not the cumulative result of complex, long-term trends working inexorably against the erstwhile workshop of the world, trends which were considerably aggravated by the disastrous consequences of two exhausting and devastating wars. The British crisis is not a proof, if any were required, that we are the victims of the unbalance between manufacture and agriculture, so often prematurely feared (not the least by Keynes); and that the effects have been aggravated by the equally shattered balance between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Nor is our crisis due to the complete failure by the Foreign Office to take into account, in deciding on policy, our capacity to sustain external burdens and obligations whether military or economic in character; though this failure has cost the country, directly and through the decrease in production and exports caused by the slowness of demobilisation, well over £1,500 millions, or more than the total drawing on the U.S. loan. No. In Mr. Harrod's opinion our troubles are due to an over-ambitious programme of investment, especially in housing and in factory buildings in the former distressed areas. Cut this expenditure (some of it has not even yet begun), and presto, the deficit in our external payments would vanish, we could introduce convertibility and practice non-discrimination, and the shop-windows and factories would also fill again with goods.

The over-investment complained of, on closer investigation, can be shown to be seriously *deficient* if we are to survive as an industrial exporting nation. Investment in fixed capital last year was barely two-thirds of the level of the depression year of 1938, according to official statistics; and we know to what parlous state capital equipment was permitted to sink in the inter-war period. To advocate non-discrimination and convertibility, which opens our foreign markets to unbridled U.S. competition, and at the same time to advocate a cut in industrial investment (especially in the building of new and efficient factories in depressed areas in which labour cannot be employed before they are completed) is to invite disaster.

Mr. Harrod wishes to restore the work of the price mechanism, of money demand, "one of the greatest human inventions, comparable to the wheel and the steam engine," by reducing "the inflationary pressure." But when will inflationary pressure cease? Mr. Harrod, like his erstwhile deflationist adversaries, maintains great reticence on this problem. So long as the general level of wages and of prices is moving upwards the system of relative prices cannot guarantee that marvellous perfection in ensuring the best use of our scarce resources of which he sings. His policy implies a reduction of the bargaining power of the unions by unemployment. Nor is a large-scale redeployment of labour conceivable without heavy unemployment if we reject control over employment and a planned wage policy.

All historical and theoretical evidence points to the conclusion that a "free" system in modern conditions needs at least 10 per cent., but more probably 15 to 20 per cent. unemployment for stability, that is to say an industrial reserve army of between 1,500,000 and 2,500,000. It is, at the least, regrettable that the "disinflationists" do not indicate their view of the amount of unemployment which is needed if the implicit conditions of the success of their policy are to be assured. No doubt the trade unions are disinclined to accept what are miscalled "totalitarian controls," but it is to be doubted whether they would not prefer them to large-scale unemployment. A planned wage policy, moreover, would substantially decrease the need for the scope of the controls. It is therefore somewhat odd to see Mr. Harrod taking up the cudgels on behalf of the trade unions and rejecting wage policy because it "would grievously interfere with the traditional methods of collective bargaining. This would be a great infringement of liberty and a serious onslaught on the historical position of the trade unions." Liberal economists always regarded collective bargaining as a monopolistic practice to be combated by all means.

Mr. Harrod goes considerably further than the other *laisser-faire* economists in giving quantitative form to his proposals. On the basis of our current adverse balance he suggests that the whole problem could be solved by a cut of £500 millions in capital outlay, of which only £350 millions are to be found by a reduction in investment, the rest by a reduction in Government expenditure.

Now if we cut Government expenditure abroad, this would certainly bring immediate relief, and this in two directions. The cost in foreign exchange of maintaining a man in the armed forces abroad, and to a less extent even at home, is far greater than the cost of maintaining him as a civilian at home. In addition the demobilised soldier (and the munition worker and the civil servants now engaged in administering him while in the forces) could contribute to national output something around £500 per annum, a large part of which could be exported. Had Mr. Harrod singled out this item, which has not been properly brought out in any of the debates on our present crisis, he would have done us a service.

As it is, Mr. Harrod's contention that a cut in home investment will automatically and without painful social cost in unemployment result in an increase of exports, is poor economics or lavish demagogy. This is best shown by the fact that he maintains that not merely would these cuts be sufficient to fill up a deficit larger than the cuts, but at the same time also to increase home supplies and fill up the shops. Unless the money demand of the mass of the workers is violently cut, this is an obvious doublecounting.

The "liberal" recipe really amounts to mass unemployment and to soaking the poor. Mr. Harrod should be a bit more candid about "whose hardships are unnecessary." And one must also ask whether Mr. Harrod and his confrères really think that industrial peace can be safeguarded and reconstruction can be expected to proceed if their proposals were accepted.

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NEW POETRY

The Bloom of Candles. Verse from a Poet's Year. By LAURIE LEE. *Lehmann.* 3s. 6d.
The Green Man. By ANDREW YOUNG. *Cape.* 3s. 6d.
The Drunken Sailor. A Ballad-epic by JOYCE CARY. *Joseph.* 6s.

Mr. Laurie Lee has become suddenly one of our best living poets. Not quite suddenly, of course, though that is the effect made by his second book. His first—*The Sun My Monument* (*Hogarth*, 1944) — showed unusual qualities, chiefly the exuberance that would twang a guitar in the wake of civil war, or later shout down larks and plovers from our own depressed and besieged skies. A certain intoxication, an incipient gaiety. The genuinely lyrical poet is so rare to-day that we may not at once recognise him. His obvious encouragements have gone; he will break out inexcusably in queer places. So, wry-mouthed at first, Dylan Thomas. Something of his acidity and bluster clings to the earlier poems of Laurie Lee, whose inclinations are, however, in general easier. War is the enemy, sex the abetter. The goaded or evasive motions in *The Sun My Monument* are no longer needed. Its author has survived. He can claim his own. That he does now, as a poet, with thrilling mastery.

The Bloom of Candles is a very little book: twelve poems in all, none more than thirty-five lines long. Their very isolation is striking. One poem, roughly speaking, has been attached to each month of the year; so that, to the most casual reader, here is a landscape calendar that beautifully and freshly illustrates its seasons:

> Where in the valley the summer rain
> Moves crazed and chill through the crooked trees
> The briars bleed green, and the far fox-banks
> Their sharp cries tangle in sobbing shades.
>
> I hear the sad rinsing of reeded meadows
> The small lakes rise in the wild white rose
> The shudder of wings in the streaming cedars
> And tears of lime running down from the hills.
>
> All day in the tomb of my brain I hear
> The cold wheat whisper, the veiled trees mourn,
> And behold through windows of weighted ivy
> The wet walls blossom with silver snails.
>
> The heron flies up from the stinging waters,
> The white swan droops by the dripping reed,
> And summer lies swathed in its ripeness, exuding
> Damp odours of lilies and alabaster . . .

A more palpable, distinct, and musical influx it would be hard, among living writers, to parallel. Turn a couple of pages. Thronging June has given way to the quiet of autumn:

> Slow moves the acid breath of noon
> over the copper-coated hill,
> slow from the wild crab's bearded breast
> the palsied apples fall.
>
> Like coloured smoke the day hangs fire,
> taking the village without sound;
> the vulture-headed sun lies low
> chained to the violet ground . . .

Again, the chime of scene and sense. "Vulture-headed," so aggressively taking, is exact to the eye as it is huge in suggestion; reading a second or third time, we shall find that its influence has spread, so as to enforce the brooding fixity of the whole poem; and not only that, but in outskirts of feeling, we are left with a sharpened awareness of the big, hunched, bald-headed bird that stares over crowds at the Zoo. Imagery of this order lights up both its object and itself; the epithet thus serving the purpose of one of those similes in Homer or Milton extended over twenty lines.

Condensation forms an essential part of modern poetry. One looks to it not so much for simple beauty as for the resolution of mixed feelings. The twelve short poems of *The Bloom of Candles* convey far more than illustrations of Nature, however vividly rendered. The poet's childhood, hungers, evasions, ebullitions, marriage, illness, fear of death, latent religion are all implicated. How lightly yet inseparably, for example, the Christmas poem winds together its shivering landscape with the birth of divinity and a candled tree, and the poem called "First Love" its scattered evidence of spring! This final effect of Mr. Laurie Lee's poetry could only be demonstrated by quoting whole poems, indeed the whole book, which with its cycle of moods and themes achieves a remarkable unity. No more vivid use is being made of English to-day; the coloured detail, the musical pattern, the springing rhythm are his. If there are any literary prizes still worth bestowing one should go to the author of *The Bloom of Candles*.

Those who already know and enjoy the poetry of Andrew Young will need no other recommendation than a new title. *The Green Man* is, apparently, his fifth book of poems, and as strictly, meticulously pleasurable as the others. He brings to country-living and verse-writing the kind of devotion one associates with another clergyman: Barnes. His range is even smaller. The things he notices are fishes under the "gluey glass" of a frost, faint human hieroglyphics on the bark at Burnham Beeches, rabbits standing upright for a moment in early summer, the old double sack thrown over barbed wire that makes a door to the ghyll, the cherry-pickers' ladders left sticking up through branches along white-washed aisles, smoke staggering from a shepherd's hut: he notices exactly with the instinctively preserving eye of the countryman for whom even a snapped branch means disturbance in the pattern. He is, one imagines, a quietly satisfied man, and being so, never needs to exaggerate. The only extravagance he allows himself, in the real countryside where he takes his walks, is the subdued play of wit. Here is one of these small and in their way perfectly fashioned pieces:

> Three that are one since time began,
> Horse, cart and man
> Lurch down the lane patched with loose stones;
> Swedes in the cart heaped smooth and round
> Like skulls that from the ground
> The man has dug without the bones
> Leave me in doubt
> Whether the swedes with gold shoots sprout,
> Or with fresh fancies bursts each old bald sconce.

Ordinariness, particularity—but a particularity that never grows trite—are the essence of this copyist's vision. His own word for his poetry is "terse." He would hate us to flatter either his scene or himself.

Mr. Joyce Cary is a considerable novelist who a few years ago produced in *Marching Soldier* a striking poem-documentary of war. *The Drunken Sailor*, described as a ballad-epic, sails through—or attempts to sail through—the perplexed weathers of Life. What mountainous and yet unsubstantial seas, what heaving and groaning and allegorising and bawling into the storm!

> Then shall my bosun Fact, a lout
> That loves to knock a man about,
> Hold against his back a knife
> That when in terror of his life
> He would believe his own false pipe
> Will jag the wind out of his tripe
> And make him scream to save his breath
> An honest faith,
> That pain is pain and death is death.

Some satiric punches land home, but the whole effect is of unreal if energetic slugging, in a verse that suggests *The Ancient Mariner* if it had been written by Skelton. Mr. Cary lacks, I think, the purely technical skill for engagement on these sliding, imaginative levels. That is not to say that *The Drunken Sailor* isn't worth reading; it certainly is. Some readers may enjoy and gain from it more than others. For myself, rather bemused, I found myself in the end where I had started out: at sea.

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A PLAN FOR THE THEATRE

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If the Labour Party has a policy towards the arts, it is probably at the bottom of their list of priorities. But when and if they reach it, no doubt the theatre will be the first art to be tackled—it so very much, on the face of things, lends itself to planning. A theatrical production is the most co-operative of enterprises (unless it yields that honour to an orchestral performance), yet nowhere is the riot of the free enterprise scramble so wild as in the world of theatre. When a plan is mooted, doubtless the appropriate committee will have in front of them this pamphlet of Mr. Priestley's. It is a middle-road plan for introducing not a rigid regimented pattern, but simply a modicum of public order into this anarchic world. Very much a Labour plan, it leaves private enterprise a due room to function in, but suggests a national theatre movement in the centre; or rather, since this might give the impression of limiting the thing to London which too much dominates the theatre already, it seeks to create a skeleton of national theatre for the whole country.

The plan comes well from a successful man of the theatre like Mr. Priestley, a man who theatrically as well as politically treads the middle road—a road somewhere between the dim alleys of the higher enthusiasm and the over-lighted broadways of Show Business and the Lucky Dip. Yet to speak of it as a plan is too pretentious. Mr. Priestley simply talks, knowledgeably and pungently, about the theatre as he knows it at the moment from experience as a producer, a manager and a playwright; and about the theatre as he would like to see it, speaking as a man with a most communicable love of his craft and a belief in its future.

He begins by listing some enemies of the theatre, high among them the Treasury:

> The State is really the greatest shareholder in our theatrical enterprises and a shareholder who invests nothing, takes no interest in what is being created, but yet contrives to grab between a third and a quarter of all the takings at the box-office. Even when everybody else concerned is losing money, the Treasury is still taking its fat cut.

As an example Mr. Priestley takes the figures of the pre-London production of three successful plays. These three productions arrived in London owing their producing managements between them about £4,500; yet on a rough estimate they had already paid the Treasury at least £33,000. This is an absurd situation and as a remedy Mr. Priestley suggests that some part of the tax should be remitted to the producing manager until he has paid off the costs of production; a further excellent proposal (which also has the merit of being immediately practicable) is a steep grading of tax according to the length of the run. This would allow greater risks with new and experimental work, and would militate against these very long runs which are often, he suggests, artificially created affairs and which anyhow are thoroughly bad for the theatre and actors alike. "No production is worth seeing," Mr. Priestley justly remarks, "after it has been running without a break for a year."

Another formidable enemy of the theatre is the theatre owner who exerts a quite unresponsible but absolutely dominating influence.

> What is wrong is that there is no public control over the ownership and letting of theatres. Anybody who pays the price is allowed to fool about with a theatre . . . . . A theatre is a licensed public building, serving a serious communal need. London's theatres are part of London's civic life. Therefore, I maintain, they should not be bought and sold and exploited as if they were nothing better than tipster's pitches at a racecourse.

The remedy Mr. Priestley proposes for this state of affairs is the creation of a Theatre Authority, representing various interests of the dramatic profession who would hold the theatres in a Theatre Pool to which producing managers would apply as their productions come ready. This would give a fair chance to everyone in his turn and would obviate the danger of anything approaching a monopoly. These immediately practical proposals might well be taken up at the forthcoming theatre conference.

The commercial management Mr. Priestley lets off lightly (except where the elements of the Gamble or the Girl-friend prevent serious people like himself from getting on with a professional job in a professional way). But a place is left for it outside the skeleton of his nationally organised theatre. It is of this that he dreams in his second part. Four permanent national companies, with their own workshops, studios and school, and their headquarter's theatre in London; large enough, too, each of them to keep a second company always on tour.

> This means that if there were four of these national companies and each of them followed the present example of the Old Vic, then any visitor to London would in any one week during the full season have the choice of no less than 12 first-class productions: while twelve equally good productions would be on tour. The company will be responsible to a national theatre authority, which would demand from them a very high standard of work but would also at the same time make sure that they were given the highest possible priority for everything they required.

Out of London, each big town would be expected to have at least two theatres. One under commercial management, to house touring companies including the tours of the four national companies; and one civic theatre, run not by the municipality, but a public corporation created for the purpose, a local corporation on which would be represented the Arts Council, the local Director of Education, and such local enthusiasm as could be mustered. For smaller towns Mr. Priestley sketches a regional scheme in which, for example, a single group operates three companies for three neighbouring towns. Thus each town would get a new play every week but the actors would play the same play for three weeks and have three weeks in which to rehearse a new one. This avoids the scramble of the present weekly repertory system which ensures a new play each week for the audience only at a severe cost to the standards of the production and to the actors' skill.

Such in rough outline is Mr. Priestley's plan. But rough outlines do not do justice to plans, and certainly not to the sharpness and the good sense with which Mr. Priestley outlines his, taking up the objections as they arise and polishing them off in his own brusque fashion. It is a pity, I think, that this stimulating essay should have been tricked out with irrelevant photographs which give it the appearance of that kind of theatre puff book which Mr. Priestley rightly deplores. If it were not for these illustrations it might have been sold at a much cheaper price and have reached a wider public who would certainly be excited to debate the issues it raises.

T. C. WORSLEY

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

BACH: *St. Matthew Passion* (Lemnitz, Beckmann, Erb, Hüsch, Schulze; with St. Thomas's Choir and Gewandhaus Orch., Leipzig, cond. Ramin. H.M.V. DB6516-31). *Ditto* (Suddaby, Ferrier, Greene, Boyce, Parsons; with Bach Choir and Jacques Orch., cond. Jacques. Decca K1673-9). The first of these issues is the re-recording of a set made in Germany during the late war. Allowing for cuts in *da capo* arias and (occasionally) in final *ritornelli*, this set contains about two-thirds to three-quarters of the whole work and omits only two numbers of major importance (the soprano aria, "Jesus Saviour," and the contralto aria with choral interjections, "See the Saviour's outstretched hands"). The dubbing, although carefully done, results in a generally heavy surface. Chorus rather dim. Orchestra includes two recorders: an attractive effect. Very fine performances by Erb, Hüsch and Schulze. German text an enormous advantage. General impression of extreme authenticity, except in the case of the female soloists, who are too operatic in style. Decca set is a random selection from what is presumably a complete recording designed to appear gradually. Choral singing superior to that in H.M.V. issue, and properly to the fore. Kathleen Ferrier and Elsie Suddaby far better suited to the occasion than their opposite numbers. Miss Ferrier sings with memorable dignity and pathos in the famous aria, "Have mercy, Lord." Soloists all a little too near the mike; otherwise good balance and excellent recording. Readers who want the work as a whole are strongly advised to wait until the Decca set is complete, before attempting a decision—particularly as this set will obviously have to be renumbered.

BRITTEN: *Four Sea Interludes* from "Peter Grimes" (L.S.O. cond. Sargent. Col. DX1441-2). *Ditto* and *Passacaglia* (Concertgebouw Orch. cond. Van Beinum. Decca K1702-4). Columbia performance sketchy and melodramatic; strings poor; no "atmosphere." Recording shallow and harsh. Not recommended on any grounds. On the other hand, Van Beinum achieves a stupendous effect of grandeur and tragedy, especially in the "Dawn" and "Moonlight" interludes, and in the Passacaglia. Steady and delicate string tone; brass richly sinister. Recording among the best I have ever heard: spacious and resonant, yet always easy on the ear. Now, for the first time in England, this music can really be heard as it is meant to sound.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet* (Vienna Philharmonic Orch. cond. Von Karayan. Col. LX1033-5). Possibly the most satisfactory of the many issues of this work. All the usual qualities of this orchestra's recordings. Performance as dramatic as Beecham's, and somewhat more refined in the *cantabile* passages. Recording highly suitable to commercial gramophones, although Beecham set contains higher frequencies.

STRAUSS: *Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche* (La Scala Orch. cond. Clemens Krauss. Decca K1681-2). Probably the clearest account of the score we have had. Krauss takes the whole work at a pace so leisurely that the tingle of overflowing vitality—especially remarkable in Koussevitzky's recording—does not develop at any point. The detail is lovely, but in the climaxes the rather dead quality of the recording produces a horrid blare.

GRIEG: *Piano Concerto* (Dinu Lipatti with Philharmonia Orch. cond. Galliera. Col. LX1029-32). At last the perfect performance of this hard-worked, but extraordinarily resistant concerto. Lipatti's playing remarkable for its restrained ardour and romantic beauty. In the cadenza his glittering *scorrevole* sets a new standard. Recording on the whole good, but so much has been let through that towards the centre of the disc (unfortunately nearly always a climax) the tone quality becomes disagreeable.

MENDELSSOHN: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor* (Eileen Joyce with L.S.O. cond. Fistoulari. Decca K1687-8). Again, the best set available. Although from a recording point of view distinctly inferior, the Ania Dorfmann set (Columbia) is quite as brilliantly played (and here brilliance is all—or almost all), and in the slow movement the piano figuration does not overlay the melody as it tends to do in the new issue. Otherwise, Miss Joyce's performance could hardly be improved upon, and the recording is bright but not edgy.

ELGAR: *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* (Hallé Orch. cond. Barbirolli. H.M.V. C3669-70). A conductor's and engineer's triumph. String tone vibrant and beautiful from top to bottom. The first recording of this work in which the ear clearly distinguishes the quartet of soloists from the rest of the ensemble.

WAGNER: Overtures to *Tannhäuser* and *The Flying Dutchman* (La Scala Orch., cond. Van Kempen. Decca K1683-5). Performances perhaps slightly less thrilling than Beecham's, but recording more up to date. Some overloading in the more strenuous passages, otherwise very realistic.

VERDI: *The Force of Destiny—Overture* (La Scala Orch., cond. Capuana. Decca K1698). The best modern version, preferable to Toscanini's powerful, but very ill-recorded performance.

Company Meetings

MIDLAND BANK LIMITED

Extracts from Statement by the Chairman, The Most Hon. The Marquess of Linlithgow, K.G., K.T., on the Report of Directors and Balance Sheet for the Year to December 31, 1947

In national affairs 1947 has been a year of progress in the sense that it has brought a more realistic appreciation of the resources and potentialities of our country. The fuel crisis brought home more vividly than had previously been recognized the prime necessity, for economic revival, of a larger coal output, and, with its aftermath, demonstrated how impossible it is to set in motion a regular rhythm in industry and maintain it while stocks of materials, components and fuel remain extremely low. The convertibility crisis brought into sharp relief the magnitude of the deficit on the balance of payments, which had hitherto been disguised by the availability of the credits from the United States and Canada, and showed that the disappointing rate of movement towards equilibrium was largely to be traced to conditions in our own economy. It became apparent that one general reason why we were not within sight of exporting enough to pay for our imports was that we were trying to do too much with limited resources of manpower, materials and capital equipment. The two crises, so different in background, emphasized the unbalanced deployment of the country's manpower, which in itself was wasteful and diminished the potentiality of "full employment."

FINANCIAL AIDS TO READJUSTMENT

Remembrance of the disastrous consequences of active monetary deflation after the first world war has generated an understandable reluctance to adopt any measures of financial restraint, even though the widely different basic conditions ruling to-day might in themselves demand some system of orderly postponement of particular classes of outlay. Moreover, restrictive financial measures are habitually thought of, even now, as being associated with high interest rates, whereas "cheap money" has been insisted upon in order to ease the burden of the enlarged national debt and to aid in financing housing and other necessary capital projects. Too often it is forgotten that, in our modern monetary system, high interest rates are not the only method, nor even an indispensable part of the technique, for restraining the use of purchasing power.

The mere suspension of convertibility and the reimposition of more stringent exchange controls went only a small part of the way towards correcting the underlying lack of balance. Happily, some progress can be reported, though many people would have wished to see a much more rapid advance towards equilibrium. Current revenue and expenditure figures have a far healthier appearance than a year ago, so that anxiety has come to be concentrated upon "below the line" expenditure. Hence the importance of the cutting down of capital programmes—and the Government has shown in practice its lively recognition of this fact—both in administrative efficiency and in co-operation between Government and business, by keeping private enterprise informed, in plain and up-to-date terms, on at least the broad lines of official policy in the exercise of its discretionary powers. The rest depends to a large extent on loyal observance of rules laid down in the interests of national recovery. However successfully and speedily the financial elements may be shaped to conform with current stringencies, the triumph over our present troubles still has to be gained through wisdom and enterprise in the management of our industrial affairs, both public and private, and through steadily increasing productivity on the part of the individual worker.

We are thus brought back to the fact, which cannot be too often repeated by ourselves to ourselves, that our recovery depends finally upon our own efforts. No one can save us if we lack the will to save ourselves. And it is just here that the territory of economics merges into that of human capacity and human behaviour. It has often been noted that the British people are at their best in moments of the gravest emergency.

NATIONAL PROVINCIAL BANK

NATION'S STRONG EFFORT

The 115th annual general meeting of National Provincial Bank Limited is to be held on Jan. 29 at 15, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2.

In his statement to shareholders the chairman, Capt. E. C. Eric Smith, M.C., says: The liability on current and deposit accounts has grown from £726,000,000 to £754,000,000. The increase of £28,000,000 is much less than the growth during 1946, and this is reflective in considerable measure of the monetary policy of the Government. There has been a considerable increase in advances to customers and other accounts, and the figure at the close of business on Dec. 31 was £185,000,000, equal to 24.5 per cent of our deposits. The net profit amounts to £1,347,929, which compares with £1,331,071 for the previous year. In July an interim dividend of 7½ per cent was paid, less tax, and it is proposed that a further payment at a similar rate should be made.

At the end of 1946 and the beginning of 1947 the cheap-money policy culminated in the issue at par of 2½ per cent Treasury Stock, 1975, but the necessary support to maintain the gilt-edged market on this basis was not forthcoming. During the year the market gradually relapsed, until in December it had assumed a 3 per cent complexion for long-dated stocks. There can be little doubt that the position is healthier for this change. The process of passing from a 2½ per cent to a 3 per cent basis must of necessity be painful for institutions whose business compels them to be consistent purchasers of gilt-edged securities.

EXPANDING PRODUCTION

Increased advances and overseas credits have been a welcome sign of expanding production and trade, and it can never be repeated too often that without such expansion the country will be unable to maintain a reasonable standard of living. Such advances and credits are now carefully shepherded to where they can assist directly or indirectly the export industries of the country or necessary internal trade. This action is a corollary of the cut in capital expenditure and is of equal importance in concentrating available resources and labour on essentials.

The export of our manufactures has been vigorously pressed and the most conscientious efforts have been made to expand existing markets and develop new ones. It can be said that the nation's effort has been commendably strong and, up to a point, successful, but the adverse balance is still present, as our sales of gold and purchases of dollars emphasise.

We have suffered from a serious onset of appeasement. Refusal to face facts has been predominant and the greatest energy has been employed in inducing people to believe they are much better off than is really the case. Every shock suffered last year was sprung on the country at the last moment, when concealment was no longer possible, and was accompanied by explanations that the causes were unforeseen occurrences for which no one was to blame. Considerable progress has now been made in the descent to earth. Efforts are being made to point out, in words of few syllables, the precarious position in which the country stands, and some of the promised prizes have been postponed. The haze of make-believe has not, however, been entirely dispelled, and much effort is still directed towards shielding certain strata of the population from the effects of increased austerity. We are, in fact, still appeasing. The Autumn Budget provides an admirable example. After the big words that preceded it, it was almost farcical; a mere face-saving gesture to show that something had been done and that no one who mattered had been hurt.

The country has a long way to go before it achieves solvency. It will, in due course, arrive, but the longer the people remain drugged with the narcotics of make-believe the longer will be the journey. The Marshall Plan is a realistic plan of unprecedented generosity. We pray for its success, but its magnitude is such that there may prove to be not a shortage of dollars but a shortage of the material things those dollars are intended to provide.

fight the crisis with

SAVINGS

What's wrong with keen saving anyway? It's good for us all and good for our country, too. So let's get cracking with every sixpence and shilling we can muster. Ten shillings buys a Savings Certificate that becomes 13/- tax free in ten years—no bad bargain! And the maximum holding is a thousand certificates. Buy through your Bank or from a Post Office or Savings Group.

SAVE THE BANK WAY

Your Bank will tell you about a new, simple way of buying National Savings Certificates—either by single purchase or regular investment, operated free of charge to customers.

Issued by the National Savings Committee

WOLF-FERRARI: *The Jewels of the Madonna—Intermezzi, Acts 2 and 3* (L.S.O., cond. Bellezza. H.M.V. C3673). Distinctively pretty music from a neglected "Veristic" opera by the composer of *I Quattro Rusteghi*. Light in texture, these pieces stand well by themselves and are very pleasantly recorded.

SMETANA: *Dance of the Comedians and Polka* from "The Bartered Bride" (R.P.O., cond. Beecham. H.M.V. DB6454). Delightful theatre music, perhaps rather too thin for intimate listening. Recording has some very startling features—of recession, brilliance and realism of instrumental timbre. Internal evidence alone suggests that this disc may be a trial balloon for the new "Transient True" method of recording, to which the Gramophone Company has given advance publicity.

ROSSINI: *William Tell—Ballet Music* (L.P.O. cond. Cameron. Decca K1454-5). Music of uneven interest: pert charm alternating with perfunctory stuff that is only tolerable when backed by dancers. Good lively performance, slightly over-recorded in places.

HAYDN: *Quartet in D major*, op. 64, No. 5 ("Lark") (Hungarian Quartet. H.M.V. DB6390-1). Admirably precise and sweet-voiced performance of a most imaginative quartet not included in the Haydn Society volumes. Excellent balance and tonal control.

BRAHMS: *Violin Sonata in G major*, op. 78 (Georg Kulenkampff and Georg Solti. Decca K1705-7). Would the years (I asked myself) have diminished the mastery of Kulenkampff's playing? After hearing this glowing yet subtle performance, I judge that they have not. The piano part is executed in perfect taste, and the recording, which was made in Zurich, is well up to the level of the performance.

FRANCK: *Pastorale*, op. 19 (Fernando Germani. H.M.V. C3672). The only recording now available of this piece, which is perhaps better known in the transcription for piano. Well made, it yet bears none of the marks of Franck's genius and is marred by a fussy middle section. The performance and recording are unexceptionable.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12* (Julius Katchen. Decca K1694). A most arresting performance by a newcomer who springs upon us apparently equipped with every weapon in the pianist's armoury. Those who enjoy virtuosity for its own sake are advised not to miss this record. It remains to be seen whether Julius Katchen possesses the rarer qualities of touch and style which Liszt's Rhapsodies do not call for.

HUMPERDINCK: *Hansel and Gretel*—Act 1, Opening Scene; Act 2, Sandman's Song and Prayer (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Irmgard Seefried with Philharmonia Orch., cond. Krips. Col. LX1036-7). An enchanting performance, which falls short of absolute excellence by reason of slight shrillness in both singers, and of a style which is in neither case perfectly smooth. But, of course, this is far the most authoritative rendering we have heard for many years. Orchestra outstanding and recording good.

VERDI: *Aida*—"Ritorna vincitor" (Lyuba Welitsch with Philharmonia Orch., cond. Krips. Col. LB65). Disappointing. This sensational young artist fails to make a plausible impression in so Italian an aria. Do not judge her capabilities on the strength of this record, but wait rather for the forthcoming selection from Strauss's *Elektra*, in which she will sing the part of Chrysothemis.

PUCCINI: "O mio babbina caro" (*Gianni Schicchi*) and Musetta's Waltz Song (*La Bohême*) (Hilde Gueden with L.S.O. cond. Krips. Decca M614). In the first of these arias Hilde Gueden's singing is exquisitely right. Her Musetta is not enough of a minx, but here again her voice is agreeably free from the piercing shrillness one associates with this part. Orchestral accompaniment exceptionally well managed. Strongly recommended.

MOZART: "Deh vieni alla finestra" (*Don Giovanni*) and "Se vuol ballare" (*Figaro*) (Paul Schoeffler with N.S.O., cond. Krauss. Decca M613). Don Giovanni in hobnail boots. Figaro rather less clumsily shod. Not recommended.

MOZART: "Et incarnatus est" (*Mass in C minor*—K427) (Erna Berger with Philharmonia Orch., cond. Krips. H.M.V. DB6536). A fascinating example of the rococo Jesuit style in Catholic art. Singing perhaps a little on the thin side, but very pure and correct. Plenty of air round both voice and orchestra.

FAURÉ: *L'Horizon Chimérique* op. 118 (Gérard Souzay acc. Damase. Decca K1693). Does not diminish one's loyalty to Panzéra, to whom these songs are dedicated and who recorded them unforgetably on a disc that is no longer available. Being very late Fauré, this cycle is perhaps not as immediately attractive as his earlier songs; but closer acquaintance reveals a profound and classical beauty. M. Souzay's performance is full of feeling, but a little strained in places, and the recording is not quite as clean as that of his former discs.

RACHMANINOFF: "In the Silence of the Night," "The Answer," "Floods of Spring," "Lilacs." (Jennie Tourel acc. Kahn. Col. LZ1038). In no way inferior to the first record of this set, reviewed last month. Indeed, the piano sounds slightly less tinny. *A propos* of this and other Lieder: if the companies can afford to waste paper on a series of leaflets analysing concertos and symphonies that everyone knows by heart, why, oh! why will they not supply all Lieder issues with the words which are indispensable to the understanding of any song?

RAVEL: *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* (Bernac acc. Poulenc. H.M.V. DA1869). These three very characteristic, dignified and touching songs were recorded before the war by the same artists. The new recording has been well made, and although Pierre Bernac's voice has lost quality in the interval, his artistry remains unimpaired.

BRITTEN: *Folk Songs*—"Foggy Dew," "The Ploughboy," "Come ye not from Newcastle" (Peter Pears acc. Britten. H.M.V. DA1873.) These arrangements bear witness to the taste and imaginative genius of a masterly musician. Peter Pears's diction is commendably clear, and the delicious humour of the words profits from his light touch. The mike catches his voice in an occasional forte; otherwise the balance is good.

On February 7th I shall deal, in a further series of expensive telegrams, with the rest of the January issues.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 936

Set by Naomi Lewis.

The usual prizes are offered for an 8-line moral poem, in the mood of Dr. Isaac Watts, based on one of the following: the poodle, the panda, the fruitfly (drosophila), the lemming, the silk-worm, the ant-eater, the mink. Results by February 3.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 933

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The usual prizes are offered for a poem in the Chinese manner on a local celebrity. Limit 10 lines.

Report by Thomas Smallbones.

The bathos of the ending which is also somehow touching, an extreme of simplicity in statement with a flat surface and no perspectives of association, sharp pen strokes with washes of irony or compassion—something like these characteristics we have come to regard (rightly or wrongly) as in the Chinese manner. There was a consistently high level among the entries sent in, but a somewhat timid choice of subjects. Mayors and Stationmasters were in an overwhelming majority. Among the runners-up were Kinch, Alan Burscough, Snitch, Caligula and Hassal Pitman. I cannot discriminate between the first six entries printed and suggest that one guinea should go to each of them.

THE LOCAL STATIONMASTER

A tall man in a silk hat, lurching with splay feet.
Passing through the station, porters salute him, not too obsequiously.
Distracted travellers appeal to him, but he waves them away:
He is too important to give information about the times of trains,
The station is gloomy: it resembles a large spittoon.
The Stationmaster's face is also gloomy,
For he suffers from indigestion and fallen arches,
And he is, after all, only a Stationmaster of the second class,
With very moderate emoluments.

W. STEWART

There is nothing celestial
About the Shoemaker.
Though he gave the Vicar's daughter
A new sole,
And the Lower Grade Clerical Officer
Fresh uppers,
His habitual Garden of Refreshment
Is the seamy side
Of other people's shoes
He does not covet.

J. R. TILL

Bob Ames has a cast in one eye,
So when he looks at you with the other
You half believe that you are merely an afterthought,
And that what is really holding his attention
Is a far-away bird in some bush
Or an angel which you can't see.
And what a welcome change from ordinary people
Who see just what is under their noses,
And nothing else!

WILLY TADPOLE

ON TOMMY LAWTON OF NOTTS COUNTY

I was the favourite in the Court of Fans;
Now, I kick the dust in a far province.
I am a prisoner in the southern third division,
Enduring the shame of a bad goalkeeper.
My head is bowed and my foot no longer sure
Through not getting enough applause.
My spiritual home is a London crowd,
With fans, rattles and crackers.
Why can't they spare a little money
To send and ransom me?

PEEBEE

The voice of Mrs. Evans the Milk is not soothing
Like the soft murmur of wife and concubines when the evening rain
Breaks the heavy oppression of a sultry day,
Or the sounds of the voices of old friends
When they come to welcome me after my return
From a long journey and we drink wine together.

No, rather is it discordant and cacophonous;
Hoarse like the cawing of crows,
And wild like the cries of Jenkins Carpenter
When he inadvertently strikes his thumb with a hammer.

W. H. G. PRICE.

Aloof and dignified
In a uniform
With gold braid
He watches the trains leave
With the detached air
Of a great admiral
Sending his fleet
To a battle
Whose outcome
Is predetermined.

LAKON

THE COUNTRY VICAR

The principles of Yin and Yang
Are admittedly less difficult
to talk about than to exemplify.
A gentleman ought always to respect
the rites and ceremonies of religion
but in my humble opinion
our Parson preaches too long.
Nor can I distinguish the six modes
of harmony which the Master recommended
in the performance of the village choir.

DERICK

OBLATION TO A DARTS CHAMPION

Watching the feathered missiles fly unerringly towards their constant goal
Propelled by the illustrious and respected 'Erb;
I see how gracefully they descend into the bedchamber of Annie,
Or float like almond blossom into the upper double one.
My glad heart rejoices at the heaven-sent skill
Of the harmonious 'Erb.
May he fulfil his destiny
When, on the second moon we shall engage in combat
With the weak-kneed and effete of Hogsnorton.

DONALD L. TAYLOR

Would W. L. Lindsay please send his address?